

Sacramento Region

Food System Action Plan



A healthy and
thriving regional
food system with
access for all

September 2015



Recognized as the Farm to Fork Capital, the Sacramento Region is renowned for the diversity, quality and vitality of our food and agriculture. Our food system is big, dynamic and complex. Over the past several years, many individuals, farmers, chefs, government agencies, businesses, institutions such as schools, food banks, health systems and other organizations including a growing number of nonprofits, have been working to strengthen this system. Increasing market demand, innovative projects and new public policy initiatives and investments are creating economic and community development opportunities to localize the food system. While much progress has been made there are still significant disconnects. Very little of the food grown in the region makes its way to our plates. Many residents suffer from persistent hunger and food insecurity. Lack of access to affordable healthy food is a major contributor to poor health status, especially as related to certain chronic diseases.

The Food System Action Plan was developed to support the Sacramento Region Community Foundation's strategic Initiative, "Connecting the Regional Food Economy." This initiative was adopted by the Foundation in late 2014 after a series of learning sessions with key members and leaders of the community, as one of its four new strategic initiatives. In early 2015, the Foundation engaged Valley Vision, a recognized leader in the food sector, to prepare the Food System Action Plan. Its development was a collaborative effort involving many regional partners and guided by a Champions Committee of leaders throughout the region. We'd like to acknowledge and thank everyone who helped us develop this first-ever plan that provides a common framework along with integrated goals, strategic priorities and recommended actions to strengthen the food system for the six-county Sacramento region. It describes the organizations and partners already working in the targeted areas, innovative models, and what is needed to reach scale and impact through investments in infrastructure, programs and organizational capacity, especially of the nonprofit sector.

The Action Plan calls for strategic leadership and investment in all aspects of the food system, from growing to distribution, and to many types of customers, from individual to retail and institutional purchasers. This approach will increase access to healthy locally-grown food for those most in need, as well as grow new markets for our farms, businesses, and food and ag entrepreneurs. Combined with increasing knowledge about the importance of agriculture to our region and the ways to access, prepare and eat these foods; training the next generation of farmers and workers; and incubating new technologies that will make our food system the most sustainable in the world – together we can achieve these goals.

More information on the Food System Action Plan can be found at www.sacregfoodaction.org



Linda Beech Cutler
Chief Executive Officer



SACRAMENTO REGION
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
YOUR PARTNER IN GIVING



Bill Mueller
Chief Executive



Acknowledgements

The Sacramento Region Food System Action Plan was prepared through a collaborative effort between the Sacramento Region Community Foundation (the Foundation), Valley Vision, and many other regional partners, especially the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). A Project Management Team was comprised of board members and staff of both the Foundation and Valley Vision. The project benefited greatly from the guidance and leadership of its Champions Advisory Committee. We are very grateful to the many people across the region who gave their time, information and expertise to the project in a variety of ways. A full list of participating individuals and organizations is included in Appendix A. Thanks also to Jineui Hong and David Shabazian of SACOG for their dedicated assistance in preparing food access maps for the project, and to Tia Shimada of the California Food Policy Advocates for updating federal school lunch program data especially for this project. Finally, a special thanks to Shawn Harrison, Founder & Co-Director of Soil Born Farms, for his leadership and guidance in bringing this plan from vision to reality.

Project Management Team

Name	Title
Sacramento Region Community Foundation	
Dennis Mangers	Board Chair, Sacramento Region Community Foundation
Meg Stallard	Board President, Yolo Community Foundation
Martin Steiner	Partner, Hefner Law
Linda Cutler	CEO, Sacramento Region Community Foundation
Priscilla Enriquez	Chief Giving Officer, Sacramento Region Community Foundation
Valley Vision	
Tim Johnson	President/CEO, California Rice Commission
Shawn Harrison	Founder & Co-Director, Soil Born Farms
Trish Kelly	Senior Vice President, Valley Vision
Robyn Krock	Project Leader, Valley Vision

Food System Action Plan Champions Advisory Committee

Name	Title/Organization
Cecilia Aguiar-Curry	Mayor, City of Winters
Veronica Blake	CEO, Placer Community Foundation
Robert Burris	CEO, Burris Service Group
Andrea Clark	Partner, Downey Brand LLP
Jack Coots	AgStart Program Director, SARTA
Steven Dambeck	Visitor Services Director, Yuba-Sutter Chamber of Commerce
Shawn Harrison	Founder & Co-Director, Soil Born Farms
Josh Huntsinger	Agricultural Commissioner, Placer County Agriculture Department
Patrick Kennedy	Supervisor, County of Sacramento
Mary Kimball	Executive Director, Center for Land-Based Learning
Ken Larson	Board of Directors, Placer Community Foundation
Dennis Mangers	Board Chair, Sacramento Region Community Foundation
Charlotte Mitchell	Executive Director, Sacramento County Farm Bureau
Mark Quisenberry	Agricultural Commissioner, County of Sutter
Nicole Rogers	Farm-to-Fork Director, Sacramento Convention & Visitors Bureau
Don Saylor	Supervisor, County of Yolo

Jay Schenirer	Councilmember, City of Sacramento
David Shabazian	RUCS Program Manager, Sacramento Area Council of Governments
Martin Steiner	Partner, Hefner Law
Amber Stott	Founding Executive Director, Food Literacy Center
Brian Veerkamp	Supervisor, County of El Dorado
Robert Weygandt	Supervisor, County of Placer County
Blake Young	President/CEO, Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services

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I. INTRODUCTION

Why a Food System Action Plan?

This report is a food system action plan for the six-county Sacramento region. Celebrated as America's Farm to Fork Capital, the region is bestowed with rich human and natural assets, as reflected in the diversity, quality and vitality of its food and agriculture and its importance to the regional economy. The value of the region's crops has continued to grow even with the drought. The region is home to UC Davis, the number one agricultural university in the world, as well as the nationally-recognized Rural-Urban Connections Strategy project of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). Our high quality agricultural products are exported globally, and ag tech is emerging as an opportunity to showcase the region's potential as a center of innovation for sustainable agriculture.





These assets are being strengthened by the growing public, business and institutional interest in eating locally-grown foods, supporting local farmers, keeping valuable farmlands in production, and incubating more food-related businesses and jobs. Given the increasing understanding of the undeniable link between health and the food we eat, ensuring that all residents have access to healthy, locally-grown foods is ever more vital.

The region's food system is dynamic and complex. Over the past several years, a host of individuals and organizations, including a growing number of nonprofits, have been working to strengthen this system. Increasing market demand, innovative projects, and supportive new policy initiatives and investments are creating new opportunities to localize the food system and improve broad-based access to and eating of healthy, locally-grown foods. However, while much progress has been made, many gaps still exist. This is seen most glaringly in the disconnect between the region's rich agricultural bounty, low consumption levels of locally-grown foods, and chronic levels of hunger and food insecurity.

The Sacramento region is at an inflection point. It has reached a threshold where better focus, collaboration and organizational capability is needed to capitalize on emerging economic opportunities and address systemic health and hunger issues in a more impactful, permanent way. Other regions have reached this threshold and have created action plans that contain a common framework linking varied goals and actions for new synergies to attain a vibrant, resilient food system.

In late 2014, after a series of listening and learning sessions with key members and leaders of the community, the Sacramento Region Community Foundation (the Foundation) took on this effort in our region, developing "Connecting the Regional Food Economy" as one of its four new strategic initiatives. In early 2015, the Foundation funded Valley Vision, a regional nonprofit social

Benefits of a Food System Action Plan:

-  Provides a roadmap for local and regional action
-  Integrates the full spectrum of food system issues within a single policy framework
-  Identifies gaps and prioritizes actions
-  Operates at community, jurisdiction, and regional scales

Adapted from "What feeds us: Vancouver Food Strategy" (2013)

enterprise with expertise and broad networks in the regional food system, to partner in preparing the first Sacramento Region Food System Action Plan.

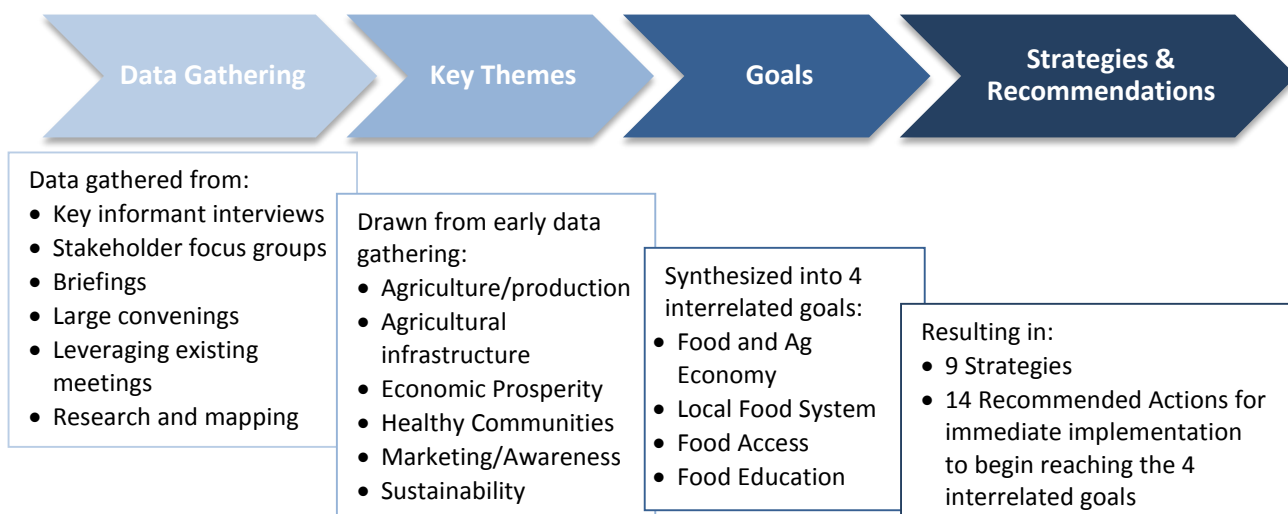
The Foundation's approach is to affect positive impact by focusing on the underlying causes of issues and seeking long-term solutions with lasting results. In the food system this means we must deal with the disconnect between the great abundance of our food and ag economy and the reality that many in our communities suffer from chronic hunger and limited access to fresh, locally-grown healthy foods. The Foundation's goal is to "identify and create upstream changes that will be required in order to ensure that everyone can benefit from a healthy and thriving regional food system with access for all."¹

The Sacramento Region Food System Action Plan (Action Plan) is intended to be a resource and a roadmap for all of the region's partners, as well as to help guide the Foundation's investments and actions for its own priority areas of impact. A particular focus is to strengthen the capacity of the nonprofit sector working to create a healthy regional food system, as this will move the region forward with needed levels of scale, capability and impact.

Overview of the Study Process

This section provides an overview of the methodology used to identify Action Plan goals, strategies and recommendations. A full description of the methodology is provided in Appendix A.

Valley Vision used a variety of analytic and stakeholder engagement processes as well as data and information sources to understand the region's current conditions, gaps, assets and opportunities. This included direct input and perspectives from approximately 250 stakeholders, including eighteen elected officials from across the region, representing diverse aspects of the regional food system. The flow chart below summarizes the key steps in developing the Action Plan.



¹ Sacramento Region Community Foundation, Connecting the Regional Food Economy Initiative, <http://sacregcf.org/index.cfm/impact/connecting-the-regional-food-economy/>

Over the course of the project, Valley Vision synthesized the information generated from the study process, analyzed the findings, and then vetted the analysis with the Champions Committee, the Foundation's Community Impact Committee, and other organizations and institutions along the six key theme areas. Further refinement of the analysis led to the identification of four primary Action Plan goals:

Goal 1 → *Ensure the viability of the food and ag economy at all scales.*

Goal 2 → *Increase the amount of locally-grown food distributed to the regional food system.*

Goal 3 → *Increase access to fresh, healthy produce, especially in underserved communities.*

Goal 4 → *Increase consumption of healthy foods through access to food and nutrition education and knowledge.*

Each of these goals is supported by one to three strategies. Recommendations are provided on specific actions that regional partners and organizations can take to advance the local food system. They are described in Chapter III, which presents the Regional Food System Action Plan. A summary table and Year One Progress Metrics are included as well.

The following graphic illustrates how the four goals intersect to create a healthy and viable food system. For example, achieving Goal 1: ensuring the viability of the food and ag economy at all scales - will provide the supply of food needed to help address Goal 2: increasing the amount of locally-grown food distributed to the local food system. Improving the infrastructure and capacity for distributing locally-grown food to the local food system will in turn help to achieve Goal 3: increasing access to fresh, healthy produce, especially in underserved communities. Increasing nutritional and cooking knowledge – Goal 4 – will help to ensure that increased access to healthy food is accompanied by increased consumption of that food. Thus, the strategies under each Goal also support the other Goals. Marketing and awareness, financing, and sustainability are core functions or aspects of the food system that support implementation across the four goal areas.



Food System Action Plan Goal Areas

The Action Plan represents a systems approach. Increasingly, people are understanding how interrelated the food system is and why an integrated approach is required to meet our goals. While immediate actions and funding may be targeted towards particular program strategies and activities, they are implemented within the context of a holistic framework. This approach should be viewed across the activities that occur along the continuum of the food system – such as the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food – and across the region, connecting our urban, suburban and rural areas for long-term stewardship of our agricultural assets and resources, a strong economy, and increased access to healthy locally-grown food for all.

II. KEY FINDINGS

There are many dimensions to the Sacramento Region food system, spanning the economy, community and environment. This chapter provides a snapshot of conditions across the region related to the wealth of the agricultural economy, gaps between local food production and consumption, and systemic issues of hunger and food insecurity. It includes an overview of the nonprofit sector working on healthy food system activities, a mapping of the emergency food provider network and food deserts across the region, and a summary of key food system assets and gaps from stakeholder and expert input. The data and information highlights the major disconnects in the food system, which cut across the four Action Plan goals. Addressing these disconnects is a high priority for the Foundation's "Connecting the Regional Food Economy" Initiative.

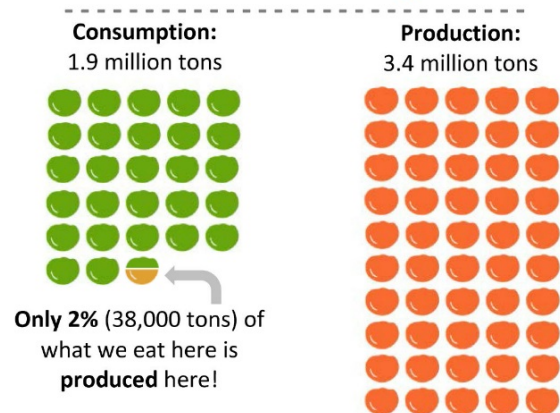
Agricultural Economy

The region's agricultural economy showed strength through the recession and continues to grow, even given the fourth year of the drought. This is due in part to strong revenues from overseas markets for high value crops such as almonds and walnuts. With more than 1.3 million acres in agriculture and about 7,200 farms and ranches of all sizes, the region produces more than 150 different crops.² The direct farmgate³ value of these crops reached almost \$2.4 billion in 2013-2014.⁴ The direct and multiplier effects of businesses and services in the food system value chain totaled several billion dollars more, including the benefits derived from exports and employment estimated at more than 37,000 jobs.⁵

Local Food Consumption

In spite of the abundance of crops grown year-round in the region, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) estimates that only 2% of the 1.9 million tons of food consumed in the region is grown locally. This is due in part to large-scale changes in the economics and levels of food production, processing and distribution, and the loss of "agricultural infrastructure" such as local-serving food aggregation and distribution facilities.⁶ This graphic illustrates the estimated imbalance between the levels of food production and consumption along with the source of food consumed in the region.

Annual Food Consumption and Production in the Sacramento Region



² 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture. SACOG Crop Map, www.sacog.org/rucs

³ A glossary is included as Appendix E.

⁴ County Agricultural Commissioner Reports for 6 counties in SACOG Region, 2014

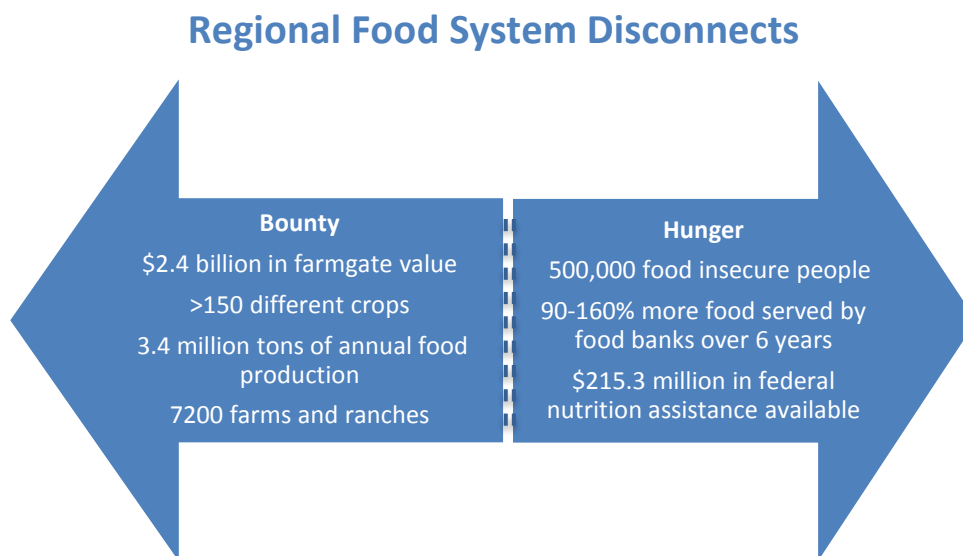
⁵ Next Economy Capital Region Prosperity Plan: Research Report, Center for Strategic Economic Research, March 2012

⁶ Sacramento Region Food Hub Feasibility Studies, SACOG, 2014, <http://www.sacog.org/rucs/>

Food Insecurity

SACOG, UC Davis, and many other organizations have documented the existence of food deserts throughout the region, along with high levels of food insecurity and food-related poor health status in certain geographic areas and among certain populations. A food desert is a geographic area where healthy and affordable food is difficult to obtain, especially for those lacking access to a vehicle. Food insecurity is defined as limited or uncertain ability to acquire nutritionally adequate and safe foods and not knowing where your next meal will be coming from, forcing people to choose between paying for food, medicine, utilities, transportation and other household costs. Hunger and food insecurity is a chronic and pervasive challenge throughout the region, reaching new levels during the recession and affecting hundreds of thousands of residents.

The graphic below highlights the disconnects between the region's great agricultural abundance compared to examples of increased levels of hunger and food insecurity across the region during the past several years. In early 2015, the region's emergency food network's four county food banks were handling 22.5 million pounds of food annually, serving an estimated 245,000 people every month in total – a gap with the estimated number of food insecure people.⁷ These conditions could be alleviated by increasing the enrollment of income eligible adults and children in federal food and nutrition assistance programs, including the free and subsidized school lunch and breakfast programs.



Source: Valley Vision, with data from SACOG, Food Banks, California Food Policy Advocates

Lack of access to affordable, healthy food is a contributor to obesity and other health issues, with obesity strongly tied to poverty and ethnicity. Recent information from the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research found levels of obesity increasing in the four-county Sacramento region (El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, and Yolo counties) and higher than state levels. About 31 percent of adults in the

⁷ Communications with the food bank of El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento and Yolo counties

region were obese last year compared to 20 percent of adults in 2001 and to 27 percent of adults in California in 2014.⁸ Research shows the significant impact of being overweight or obese on the development of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and cancer and the impact of these diseases on individual and societal healthcare costs.

CalFresh, the state's implementation of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), is a key strategy for decreasing food insecurity. CalFresh helps low-income families buy the food they need for health and nutrition. Table 1 shows trends in CalFresh participation for each of the region's six counties, for 2009 and 2012. Participation rates (i.e., the percent of eligible individuals participating in the program) varied widely in 2009, from a low of 31% in Yolo County to a high of 91% in Yuba County. Almost 40% of eligible residents (105,000 persons) region-wide did not access the program in 2009. Due to the depth of the recession and other factors, the number of income eligible individuals rose by almost 80,000 persons between 2009 and 2012 - an increase of 28% over three years. Reflecting dedicated efforts by counties and nonprofits to increase enrollment for needed benefits, the total number of eligible non-participants actually decreased and the overall program access rate climbed from 63% to 76%. Almost every county improved its access rate.

Table 1. CalFresh Participation by County (2009 and 2012) and Potential Economic Impact of Increased Participation (2012)⁹

County	Income Eligible Individuals (2009)	Income Eligible Non-Participants (2009)	Program Access Index (PAI) (2009)	Income Eligible Individuals (2012)	Income Eligible Non-Participants (2012)	Program Access Index (PAI) (2012)	Additional Economic Impact Generated w/ Full Participation (2012)
El Dorado	13,550	8,240	0.39	16,416	4,813	0.70	\$10,600,000
Placer	26,180	16,758	0.36	32,871	15,045	0.54	\$28,800,000
Sacramento	178,674	45,538	0.76	235,937	33,919	0.85	\$63,200,000
Sutter	17,316	9,817	0.43	18,408	6,546	0.64	\$11,400,000
Yolo	33,958	23,352	0.31	40,620	24,081	0.40	\$46,600,000
Yuba	10,223	890	0.91	14,965	2,127	0.85	\$3,950,000
Total	279,901	104,595	0.63	359,217	86,531	0.76	\$164,550,000

Source: California Food Policy Advocates, Nutrition and Food Insecurity Profile by County, 2010 and 2014

California Food Policy Advocates estimates that an additional \$165 million could be infused into the regional economy if all income eligible individuals were enrolled (direct, indirect and induced costs).¹⁰ Another strategy for decreasing food insecurity is enrollment of low-income students in the federal free

⁸ "UCLA study finds more Californians are obese, diabetic," Claudia Buck and Philip Reese, Sacramento Bee, August 19, 2015

⁹ Income is the primary eligibility criteria for CalFresh participation, but is not the only criteria.

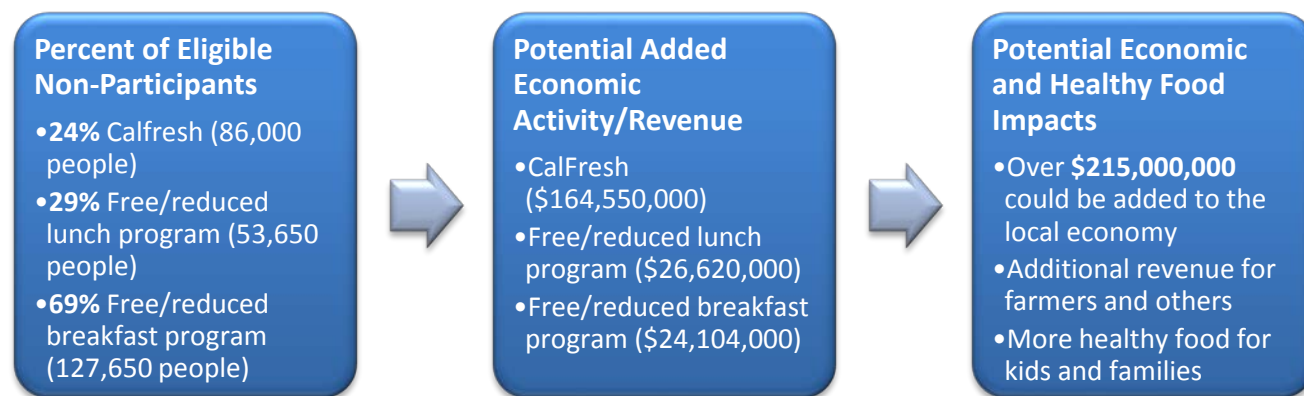
¹⁰ Based on economic impact estimates by USDA, Economic Research Service, every federal dollar spent on food stamp program expenditures generates \$1.79 in additional economic activity by shifting cash income spent on food to nonfood spending, and increasing funding related to agricultural production and activities.

or reduced-price school meals program, which includes both breakfast and lunch. The number of students who are income eligible for this program is a proxy measure for family poverty. In 2013-14, 207,000 students across the region were eligible for the program, with an estimated 71% participating in the school lunch program.¹¹ Increasing enrollment in the lunch program could directly generate up to \$26.6 million in additional resources.¹²

A significantly smaller number of eligible students participated in the breakfast program, ranging from 26% in Placer County to 48% in Yuba County.¹³ In 2013, Valley Vision conducted research focused on the breakfast program at local high schools and found that few students eligible for, and not participating in, the free and reduced-price breakfast program did so because they were eating breakfast at home.¹⁴ If the same number of students participating in the lunch program did so for the breakfast program, an estimated \$24 million in direct food-related federal reimbursements could be received for the region, benefitting students, families, growers and others in the food system.¹⁵ A recent statewide report on the impact of increased participation in the School Breakfast Program calculates a positive economic and fiscal impact as well as giving children a healthy start to their day, improving their ability to learn.¹⁶

The following graphic summarizes the percent and number of people eligible for but not participating in federal food assistance and nutrition programs, the potential economic revenues that could be generated by each program, and the potential impacts, including up to \$215 million across the three programs which would be a major economic benefit and increase healthy food available to participants.

Federal Food Program Assistance Opportunities



These three examples identifying opportunities for increasing participation in federally-funded food assistance programs illustrate areas where concerted action can have meaningful cross-cutting impacts.

¹¹ County Nutrition and Food Insecurity Profiles, prepared by California Food Policy Advocates, 2015

¹² Estimate provided by Tia Shamada, California Food Policy Advocates, September 2015

¹³ County Nutrition and Food Insecurity Profiles, prepared by California Food Policy Advocates, 2015

¹⁴ "Factors shaping the success of the School Breakfast Program in Sacramento high schools," Valley Vision, 2013

¹⁵ County Nutrition and Food Insecurity Profiles, prepared by California Food Policy Advocates, 2015

¹⁶ "Good for Kids, Good for the State – the Economic and Fiscal Impact of Increasing Participating in the School Breakfast Program," prepared for California Food Policy Advocates by Blue Sky Consulting, 2015

The Nonprofit Sector and the Regional Food System

The Sacramento region is benefited by the passion and dedication of the many individuals working in the nonprofit sector. The work done by these organizations fills many gaps within our social services, environmental and economic systems. On May 5, 2015, the Sacramento Region raised \$5.6 million in 24 hours for the 529 nonprofit organizations participating in BIG Day of Giving, an annual celebration of philanthropic giving managed by the Sacramento Region Community Foundation. The Foundation has a strong interest in the health and strength of the nonprofit sector, as this is where most philanthropic giving occurs and where it is able to have the greatest impact in creating prosperity and improving the overall health of the region.

While there are many actors in the regional food system, nonprofit organizations are playing an increasingly vital role, but they often lack the leadership, resources and capacity to be as effective and impactful as they could be, including missing the potential to scale up successful models. To inform the development of Action Plan strategies, Valley Vision conducted a first-ever assessment of the organizations working on the region's healthy food system activities. We used several criteria to determine which organizations would be included in the inventory:

- 501(c)(3) status, or under the auspices of a 501(c)(3)
- Core mission is food-related, and/or running programs in that particular activity area
- Program-driven rather than fee-for-service
- Focused on building community capacity (for example, organizations are included if they are helping to build community gardens as opposed to having a community garden)
- Serves as a lead coordinating organization (for example, there are more than 400 emergency food distribution agencies but only the lead organizations –food banks and large food pantries– are included. The emergency food system is described more fully in the next section)
- Proven or promising results in this or a related activity area

We began by drawing upon our experience with, and knowledge of, food system-related activities within the nonprofit sector, including six years of managing the Sacramento Region Food System Collaborative which directly engaged nonprofits throughout the region, our other food and ag-related projects, and our research on such topics as food hubs, school breakfast programs and workforce skills gaps. We then expanded the inventory through additional research and information provided by project advisors, funders and the nonprofits themselves.

Due to this project's focus on the nonprofit sector, programs run by local-government agencies are not included in the inventory. For example, Yolo Bonus Bucks is an EBT healthy food incentive match program in Yolo County; however, it is run by the county's Department of Employment and Social Services and thus is not included.

Table 2 shows a summary of the distribution of the nonprofit organizations working on healthy food system activities, by the major types of activities in which they are engaged relevant to this project.

There are 57 organizations, some working in multiple areas. A detailed inventory, with organizations listed individually, is included in Appendix C. A description of each activity area is in Appendix D.

Table 2. Nonprofit Organizations Working on Healthy Food System Activities in the Capital Region by Activity Area

Type of Activity	Number of Organizations
Community Gardens	2
Corner Store Conversion	1
EBT Healthy Food Incentive Match (CalFresh)	2
Farm-to-School	8
Farmers' Markets	13
Food Access	32
Food Distribution	16
Food & Nutrition Education	32
Food Safety	3
Food Waste	5
Gleaning	5
Home Gardens	5
Hunger Awareness	15
Marketing/Awareness	19
Policy	12
School Gardens	10
Urban Agriculture	8
Workforce Development & Education	12

Source: Valley Vision, 2015

While it appears that many organizations are concentrated in a few areas of activity such as food access and food and nutrition education - implying a strong level of capacity - the actual level of effectiveness and impact is not solely represented by the number of organizations working in that area. Additionally, the enthusiasm for food system-related work has resulted in a recent growth of nonprofit organizations that are still young and do not yet have proven results. We do know that there are significant operational, resource and capacity gaps, and inefficiencies and lack of coordination within and across activity areas – challenges that were validated by the stakeholders’ and expert advisors’ input.

With the importance of the role nonprofit organizations play in healthy food system activities, it is crucial that the nonprofit sector be robust and healthy to take full advantage of the expertise, skills, and passion of the individuals dedicated to this work. This inventory and analysis is an ongoing progress and requires further evaluation. The Foundation will be holding a nonprofit forum in the next few months to analyze and discuss this information further.

The Emergency Food System Network and Food Deserts

The region's emergency food system network is comprised of four county food banks (Food Bank of El Dorado County, Placer Food Bank, Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services, and the Yolo Food Bank), and more than 400 emergency food distribution agencies to which they distribute food. The purpose of this section is to provide a visual overview of major food access gaps as represented by a mapping of food deserts in each of the region's counties, overlaid with the location of emergency food provider points of distribution. The maps were created by SACOG as part of its food desert study. Information on the location of the region's emergency food distribution sites was provided by four food banks, with SACOG plotting the data on the food desert maps.

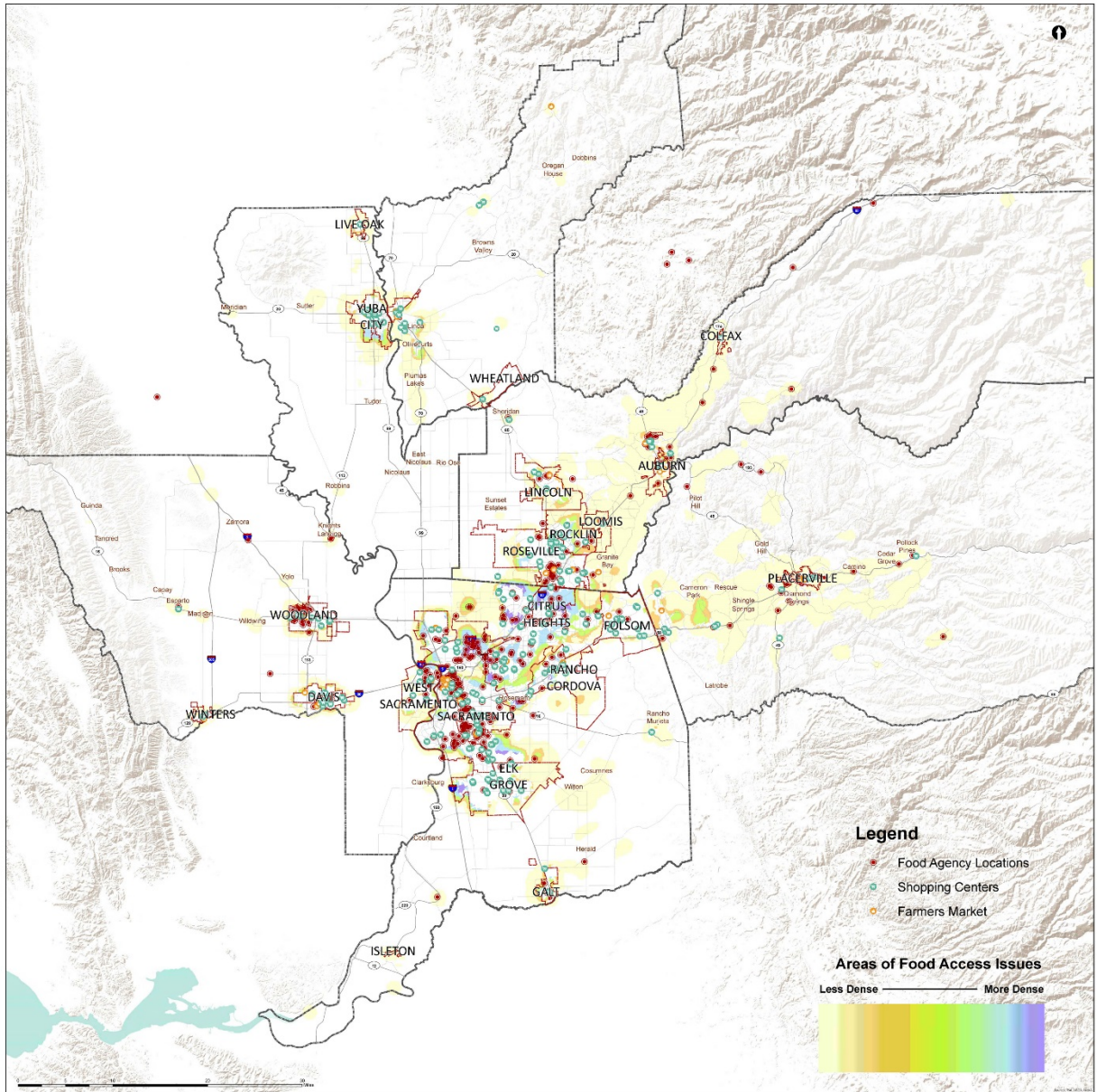
These are the first maps in the Sacramento region to show food desert areas along with major food access points, including emergency food distribution sites, grocery stores, and farmer's market locations. The areas of food access concern are further refined by population density. SACOG defines food deserts as an area in which access to healthy food is greater than 15 minutes of travel by public transit, biking, or on foot. This measure is unique as most areas defined as a food desert are based on distance (miles) to an access point.^{17,18} The regional map is followed by county maps so that more detail can be gleaned.

Four hundred distribution sites is a significant number; however, each of these distribution points does not represent equitable food access. Most of the agencies are food pantries open no more than one day a week, and many are open only one or two days each month. Some of the sites are soup kitchens, child care programs, or other programs that use the food to cook and serve meals to clients. Capacity varies by site. Being mostly volunteer-run limits the number of days many food pantries are able to be open to distribute food to their clients. The least amount of information is known about the emergency food distribution system in Yuba-Sutter counties which has the smallest number of distribution sites.

The maps clearly demonstrate that there are many food access gaps and unserved areas, in both urban and rural locations. The concentration of distribution points varies for each county. In some cases food is further distributed from the points of distribution to additional sites but the extent is not fully known. The mapping does not show the quality and effectiveness of the system, but qualitative information on these characteristics has been obtained from other sources including the food banks and other agencies and is the basis for the strategies and recommendations for Goal 3 in Chapter 3. This information can be used by the food banks to consider where existing distribution sites need to be enhanced, and where additional distribution sites might be needed. Expanded capacity needs include both organizational and facilities such as cold storage, as the food banks and distribution sites handle increasingly large amounts of fresh produce, and are constrained from doing so due to these capacity issues.

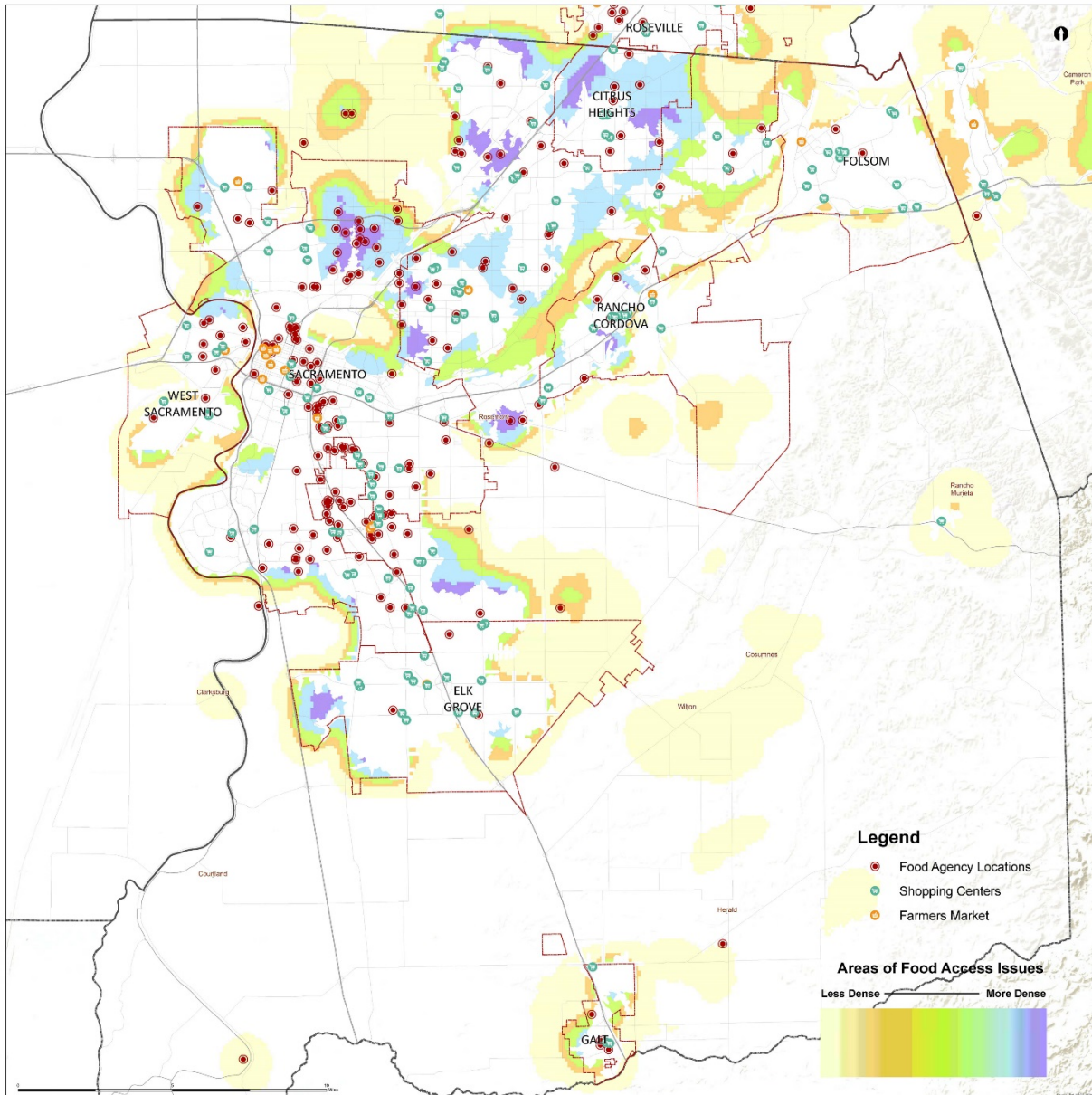
¹⁷ Travel assumptions are defined as 3mph walking speed on roads with sidewalks; 10mph cycling speed on marked bike lanes; and 15 minutes or less travel by public transit.

¹⁸ "Regional Food Desert Mapping Study." SACOG, 2013.



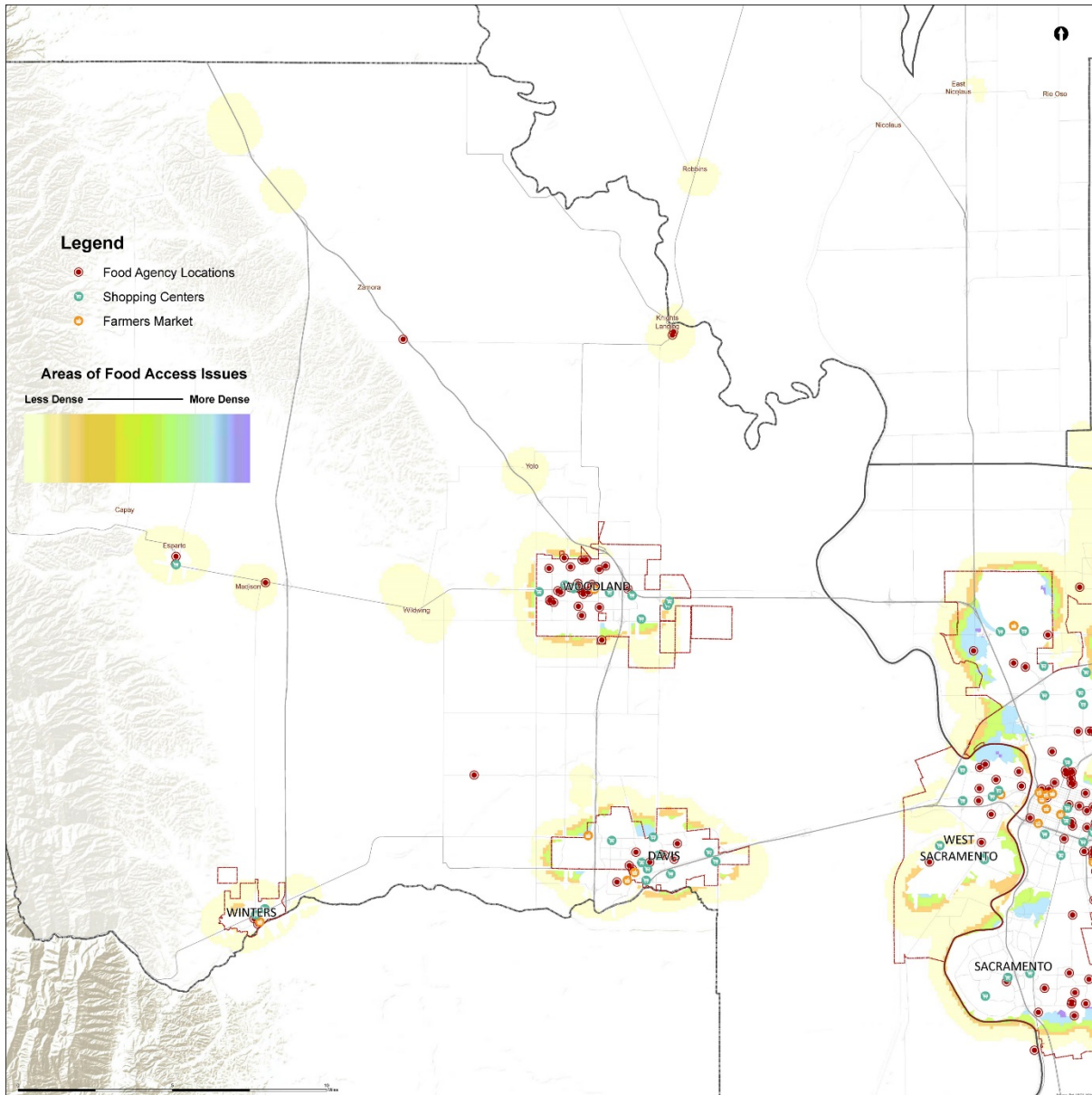
Sources: SACOG; Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services; Placer Food Bank; Yolo Food Bank; Food Bank of El Dorado County

Sacramento Region Food Access Locations and Food Desert Areas



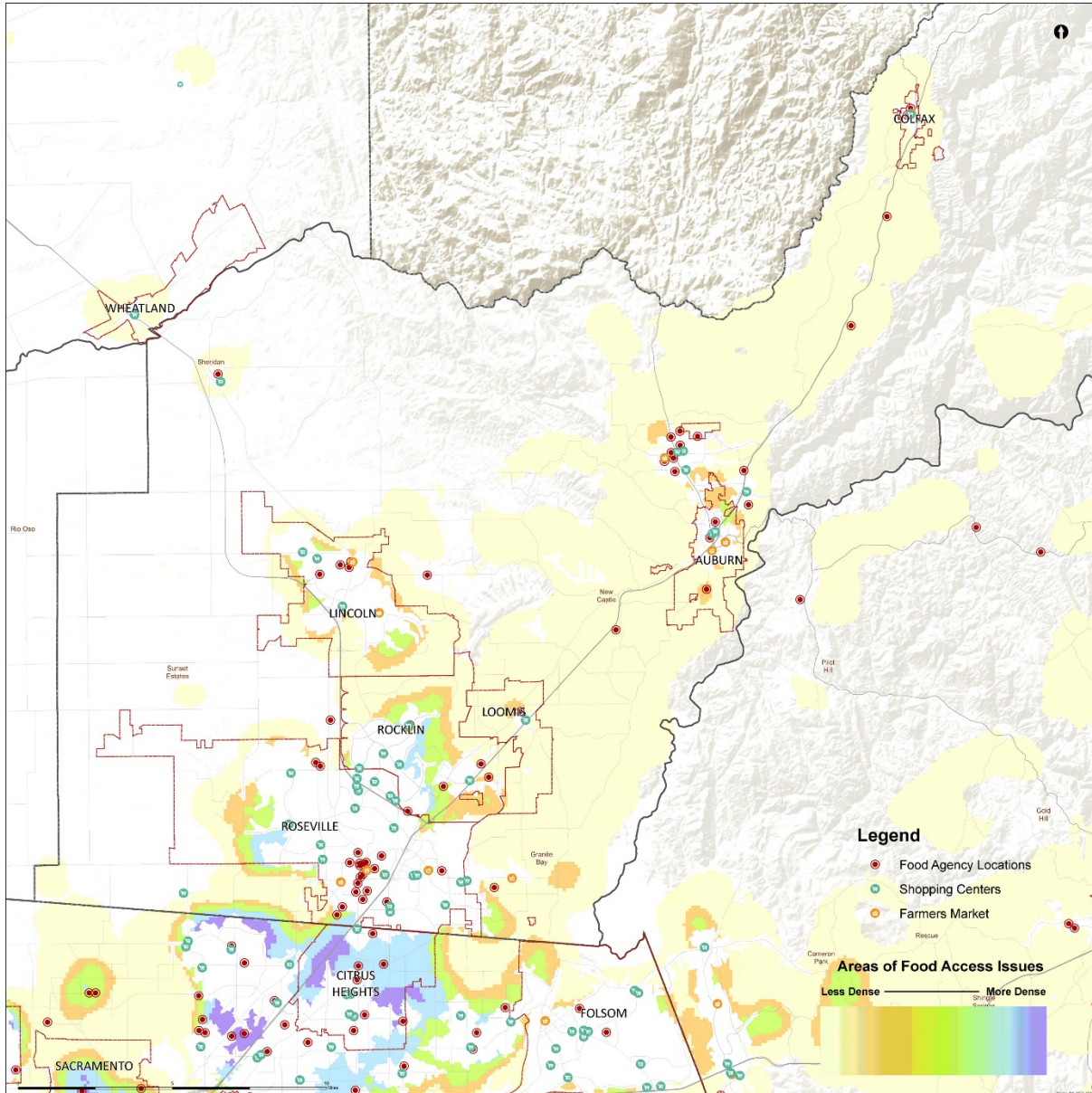
Sources: SACOG; Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services

Sacramento County Food Access Locations and Food Desert Areas

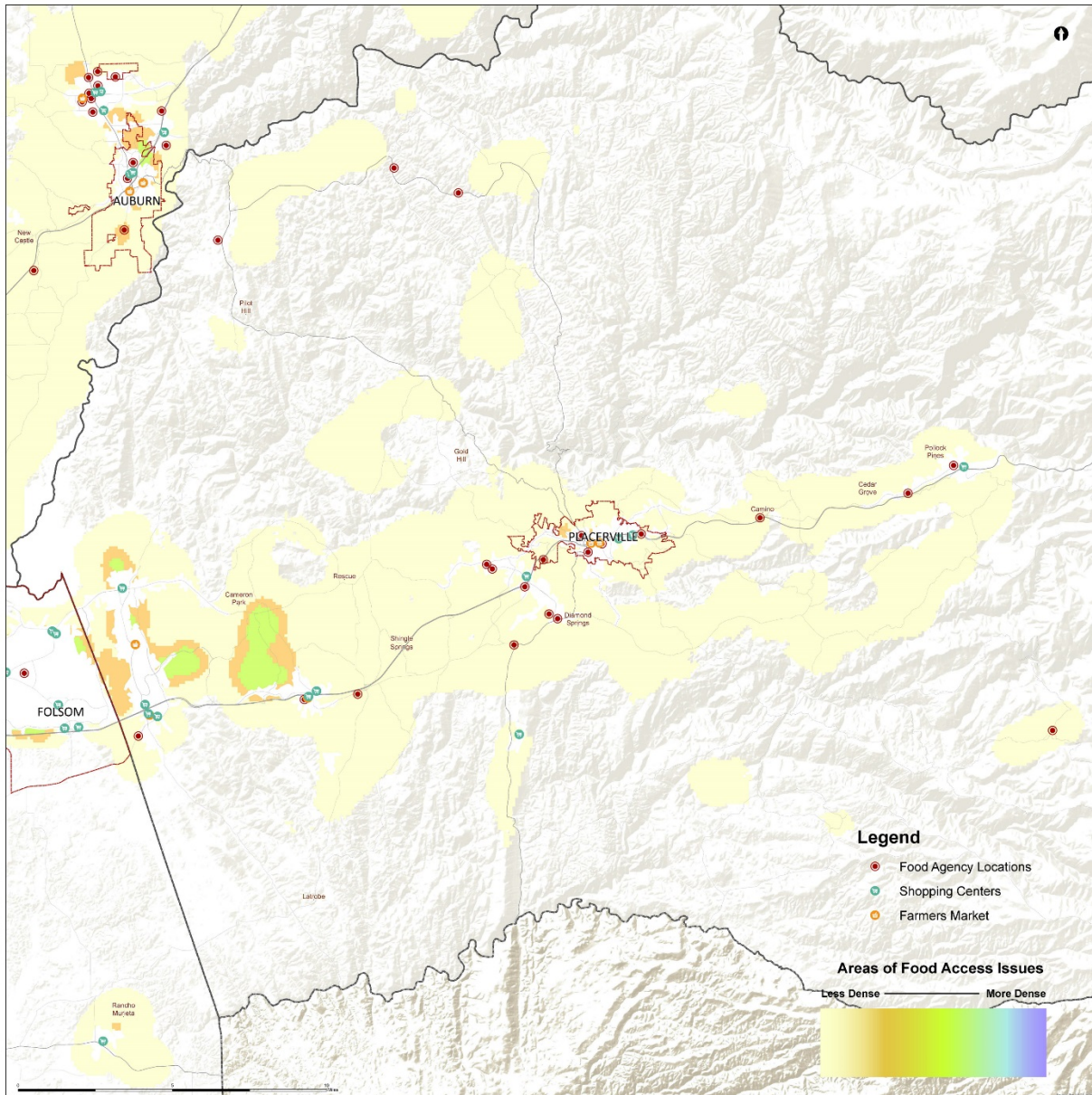


Sources: SACOG; Yolo Food Bank

Yolo County Food Access Locations and Food Deserts Areas



Sources: SACOG; Placer Food Bank



Placer County Food Access Locations and Food Desert Areas

Sources: SACOG; Food Bank of El Dorado County

El Dorado County Food Access Locations and Food Desert Areas

Summary of Gaps and Assets Stakeholder Input

A key focus of the data gathering process was to identify the region's food system gaps and assets through stakeholder engagement activities. Early in the study process, six themes emerged: agriculture production; agriculture infrastructure; healthy communities; economic prosperity; marketing/awareness; and sustainability. At focus groups and convenings and in interviews, stakeholders provided input on gaps and assets in our regional food system across these six themes. Table 3 provides a summary of these findings; a list of more specific assets and gaps is provided for each goal in Chapter 3, and a comprehensive listing of the gaps and assets can be found at the project website.

Table 3. Summary of Gaps and Assets by Theme

	Assets and Gaps
Agriculture/Food Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both rural and urban farmers have difficulty accessing resources such as financing and affordable land. This is true for beginning farmers as well as farmers wanting to expand operations Business planning, mentoring and market information are needed Land conservation and resource stewardship needed for agriculture at all scales and for a healthy, sustainable local food system <i>Assets: all types of farming, climate, water, skilled farmers and workers, diversity and quality of crops, immigrants, knowledgeable nonprofits, new farmers, strong relationships, urban ag programs</i>
Agricultural Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation logistics and road maintenance/improvements along with public transportation to outlying areas Needed facilities: cold storage/freezer space, local distribution network, aggregation, packing, processing for produce, meat and poultry; distribution to meal feeding sites; incubators; commercial kitchens; efficient water access/distribution; waste remediation Reliable broadband access needed for farming and market access Coordinated, sensible, supportive legislation, an ombudsman <i>Assets: Anaerobic digesters, UCD, AgStart, financing, well-established distribution network, strong farmers market system and marketing organizations, processing sites, farms, organizations</i>
Economic Prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce development and training programs needed to develop the next generation of farmers Access to markets needed for small and mid-scale farmers, especially to connect with institutional customers Expansion/development of processing and distribution sites, including for job generation in low-income communities Economics must work for farmers and ranchers A sustainable funding vehicle that supports key social, educational, and emergency food programs <i>Assets: Farm to Fork, UCD, SACOG, agritourism, urban ag, education and training institutions including nonprofits, cities focused on food processing and distribution, biofuel industry, restaurants</i>

Healthy Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency food providers face similar challenges across the region • EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) healthy food incentive programs have proven successful but are highly underfunded • For many children, school is the only place they get fresh food • Federal nutrition assistance programs are undersubscribed, leaving people hungry and millions of federal dollars on the table • Many people lack knowledge of where to access healthy foods, and lack transportation access to these foods • Even when access to healthy food is available, nutrition and cooking education is needed to establish healthy eating habits • Affordability of healthy foods is a challenge for many • More support is needed for school and community gardens • Agencies and programs need to be better connected, coordinated • <i>Assets: growers including urban and community farms, food banks and food closets, many organizations working together to leverage resources, Building Healthy Communities, gleaners, SNAP-Ed programs, Soil Born Farms, Center for Land-Based Learning, farm to school programs</i>
Marketing/Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of agriculture to the region's economic, social and environmental health needs to be more widely understood, both within and outside of the region, as well as the importance of buying local, organic and supporting small farms • More awareness needed on career pathways and opportunities for new farmers • More education needed on food access and healthy foods, and better communications, especially in low-income neighborhoods • There is a need to tell the stories of the farmers and of the region • <i>Assets: support for farm to fork, local foods, regional agriculture, marketing (local grown programs, America's Farm to Fork Capital), good models, good people and organizations</i>
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The drought has underscored the need for agriculture at all scales to utilize water and energy conservation strategies and technologies • Increased gleaning, purchasing of seconds, recycling and resource recapture, and turning waste into energy to reduce waste and hunger and create new economic opportunity • Policy is key to making this work sustainable; continued buy-in and support is crucial • Better communication across service agencies needed to create more efficiency in services • <i>Assets: farmland protection, good models of environmental stewardship, good organizations, water and waste innovations</i>

The next chapter of the report shows more specifically how gaps and assets have been used to inform the goals, strategies, and recommended actions in the Action Plan.

III. FOOD SYSTEM ACTION PLAN GOALS, STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the Action Plan's four major goals with focused strategies and recommendations as an integrated framework to strengthen the regional food system. Each strategy contains a list of key gaps that are being addressed, assets or models that could be replicated and/or brought to scale, and a set of actionable recommendations. To recap, the four Food System Action Plan goals are:

- **Goal 1:** Ensure the viability of the food and agriculture economy at all scales.
- **Goal 2:** Increase the amount of locally-grown food distributed to the regional food system.
- **Goal 3:** Increase access to fresh, healthy produce, especially in underserved communities.
- **Goal 4:** Increase consumption of healthy foods through access to food and nutrition education and knowledge.

For each goal, we recommend one to three interrelated strategies for achieving the goal, and recommended actions as implementation steps. Goal 1 addresses the production side of the regional food system. Goal 2 addresses the aggregation, storage, packing, processing, and transportation aspects of the food system. Goal 3 addresses access to healthy, locally-grown foods in all communities across the region, and Goal 4 addresses the need for education in order to assure increased access leads to increased consumption. There is a discussion of the assets and gaps identified through the stakeholder input process, an identification of initiatives occurring throughout the region that could be a resource for the Action Plan, and highlights of innovative models from here and elsewhere. The following criteria were considered to identify the core strategies and recommended actions:

- Builds on existing food system assets and investments
- Incorporates a systems approach
- Seeks leverage points where investors can make an impact
- Includes innovation models and pilots that are working in the region or elsewhere
- Scales to a regional level
- Connects urban and rural in partnerships
- Aligns activities toward shared regional goals
- Builds the capacity of the nonprofit sector
- Addresses a critical funding and/or capacity gap

The next sections of this chapter describe each goal with associated strategies and recommended actions. These are then presented in a summary table along with a set of potential metrics to track progress over the first year of implementation and set the stage for longer term metrics. The chapter concludes with a discussion of funding strategies and a financing initiative that would support all the goal areas, along with recommended priorities for initial Action Plan investments. It also addresses opportunities related to addressing food waste along the continuum of the four goals, which would help decrease food insecurity, improve the environment, and provide new economic development opportunities.

Goal 1: Ensure the viability of the food and agriculture economy at all scales.

There are many factors which contribute to a viable regional food and agriculture economy. The following is a summary of the key issues identified as gaps during the stakeholder input process. Combined with existing documented information and knowledge and research conducted for the project, the input helped identify priorities for the strategies and implementation recommendations in Goal 1. They are drawn from the six theme areas, and are particularly focused on opportunities to expand and strengthen food production for the local market for all growers, including increasing the capacity of small to mid-sized growers and food entrepreneurs to participate more fully in “farm to fork.”

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ECONOMY GAPS

Gaps	Issues/Needs
Access to Affordable Land, Urban and Non-Urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable acreage for new and existing farmers growing for the local market • Incentives, policies and resources to keep current farm and ranch lands in production/viable • More vacant urban lots and rooftops converted to small farms
Business Planning & Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for growers on regulatory/business needs, sustainability • Assistance with innovation adoption/dispersal • Leveraging of agritourism connections
Financing/Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital to increase scale of farming operations, assist with yearly start up • Capital access for value-added food and ag businesses including ag tech and export, and incubators/accelerators • Fair prices for products, and fair wages for growers and workers • Rising labor costs and workforce shortages
Food Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food safety education and training for urban ag/farmers at all scales, to be better equipped to sell to distributors/institutions, other markets/customers • Certifications
Markets/Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantified demand for food volume and types, diversity of field crops; information on economics of changing crop patterns • Use of fresh produce seconds (beyond waste) • Marketing the region, telling the story of ag and farmers
Policy/Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory barriers; keeping up with/interpreting regulatory demands • Local environmental management leadership/speedy adoption of new legislative initiatives related to small scale ag
Sustainability/Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drought impacts; water availability/quality; reuse, conservation strategies • Food waste (from production through consumption); recycling; gleaning • Use of chemicals
Transportation/Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband infrastructure/access • Road maintenance/improvement, especially in rural areas (farm to market)
Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigration reform • New farmer training • Career pathways/skills building across the full spectrum of food and ag • Veterans support

The food and ag economy starts with the land as well as the capacity and expertise of farmers and ranchers, climate, water and other natural resources. Agricultural land is a unique and limited resource, offering multiple benefits to the region in addition to food production and agricultural exports - a major source of wealth for the regional economy. Other benefits include habitat, natural landscapes, heritage, agritourism, and help in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Keeping working landscapes viable is essential for feeding our growing population as well as maintaining our global competitive advantage.

The Sacramento region saw high levels of conversion of agricultural lands to urban and other uses in the decade prior to the recession, leading to the adoption of the Regional Blueprint Strategy by SACOG to guide development toward existing developed areas and preserve farmlands.¹⁹ Subsequently, SACOG created the Rural Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS) which has developed nationally recognized land use and economic planning tools to support the regional ag economy (<http://www.sacog.org/rucs/>).

RUCS information indicates that land use patterns have become more efficient over the past several years.²⁰ With the economy rebounding from the recession, there again will be pressure to convert valuable farm land to urban and other uses, especially at the urban edge. Development and market pressures also will increase the cost of land, pricing many growers - especially new and minority farmers - out of the market and making it difficult for existing farmers to stay in business.



There are many new opportunities to increase agricultural production and value-added activities and enterprises across the region. They include:

- Strong and increasing consumer, business and institutional market demand for healthy, locally-grown and source-identified foods;
- Focus on developing middle-scaled infrastructure to get more locally-grown foods into regional and other markets;
- Supportive local and regional planning efforts;
- New urban agriculture programs;
- New policy initiatives (e.g., the adoption of urban ag ordinances permitting food sales and providing tax breaks for five years); and,

¹⁹ 2010 California Regional Progress Report, by Applied Development Economics, Collaborative Economics, and UC Davis Information Center for the Environment for the California Department of Transportation and the California Strategic Growth Council, 2010.

²⁰ SACOG RUCS Program, presentation for the Yuba-Sutter Food System Strategy Meeting, July 24, 2015.

- Increased interest in farming as an occupation, for a business, or for community building.

To meet these opportunities, new systems and resources are needed to facilitate the availability of affordable land for growers, train the next generation of growers, and enable growers to adapt to changing environmental conditions and regulatory requirements. The pervasive drought makes this need all the more clear.

Goal 1 has three core strategies:

- 1.A: Increase access to financing and affordable land for existing and emerging farmers.
- 1.B: Increase the pipeline of new growers and create career pathways across the entire education and training system.
- 1.C: Support the development and deployment of new technologies that help agriculture adapt to changing environmental conditions, improve health and remain competitive.

These strategies will help increase business, entrepreneurship and job opportunities in the emerging regionally-based food and ag economy.

Strategy 1.A:

Increase access to financing and affordable land for existing and emerging farmers.

A 2011 national survey of beginning farmers identified lack of capital (78%) and land access (68%) as the two biggest challenges facing growers, especially new growers.²¹ There are limited financing resources for new farmer land acquisition and limited awareness of the resources that do exist. This strategy provides recommended actions to increase access to ag land through both leasing and owning options, and financing for operations and expansion, including facilities and activities related to aggregation, storage, packing, processing, agritourism, and renewable energy generation, for all levels of agriculture.

Leasing land can reduce cost barriers to entry for farming. Urban agriculture holds promising potential for this approach by opening up smaller parcels of land to lease for farming for revenue-generating purposes, as a for-profit, nonprofit or social enterprise model. While other factors must be considered, such as lease terms and costs including soil remediation, access to water, and installation of irrigation and metering equipment, urban agriculture also has the potential to increase access to fresh foods in neighborhoods with limited access; activate underutilized sites; support training and job opportunities; and help build healthy communities. The city of West Sacramento's Urban Farm program being implemented by the Center for Land-Based

Model: Center for Land-Based Learning and City of West Sacramento Urban Farm Program, which has 5 urban farms with 8 farmer entrepreneurs.

<http://landbasedlearning.org/west-sac>

Learning also demonstrates that property values are improving. There are now five farm sites in the City with eight separate farm incubator businesses on both publicly and privately-owned properties. In addition to the City, sponsors include Wells Fargo, Community Business Bank, West Sacramento Housing

²¹ California Farmlink, referencing a national survey by the National Young Farmers Coalition.

Development Corporation, Nugget Markets, Raley's, Engstrom Properties, Fulcrum Property and Bayer Crop Science.

Assets: City of West Sacramento, Center for Land-Based Learning, Code For America, SACOG, Soil Born Farms, Sacramento Urban Ag Coalition, City of Sacramento, Del Paso Heights Growers Alliance, Yisrael Family Farm, UC Davis, Yolo-Solano Farmbudsman, Sacramento Natural Food Coop, banks, grocery stores, developers, California FarmLink, California Treasurer's Office, Fresher Sacramento, County Farm Bureaus, County Ag Commissioners, UC Cooperative Extension, Capital Region Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network, Yuba-Sutter EDC, city and county economic development agencies, California Department of Food and Ag, USDA Rural Development California, Farm to Fork, Feed the Hunger Foundation

Recommended Action 1.A.i:

Inventory publicly and privately-owned properties available to lease for urban farming by adopting and scaling up in jurisdictions throughout the region new civic technology platforms being prototyped.

The city of West Sacramento, in partnership with SACOG, is the beta test site for two new software products – Acres and Farm Stand - being developed by Code for America fellows using open source software as civic technology.²² Acres allows landowners to upload information about available urban farm sites into an online database that can be accessed by aspiring farmers. Information will include soil quality, size of parcel, water availability and lease terms. SACOG is assisting with input on additional GIS information layers. The platform is intended to be utilized in other urban areas and can be adapted for rural areas. Farm Stand will allow farmers to upload information about their farms, including hours, available products, and prices, and disseminate information to interested persons in a variety of ways. Funding resources would be required for the City or another party to serve as a technical assistance provider for scaling and replicability of the software platform.



Ultimately, the farm site inventory should include information on the true cost of activating proposed sites for farming. Soil remediation is often required, and water delivery systems and metering are a significant expense. As an example of reducing barriers to entry, the city of West Sacramento is deferring water connection fees. New financing models and resources will need to be developed in order to implement an impactful urban agriculture program throughout the region. See the recommendation for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative at the end of this Chapter.

²² City of West Sacramento, July 2015

While the site inventory is for properties that would be farmed for a commercial purpose, it is possible that the software program could be amended to include sites that could be used for community gardens, as a community resource. There are commercial software programs on the market that could be available for a cost.

Recommended Action 1.A.ii:

Connect and assist existing and new farmers with financing resources to acquire farmland, expand operations and facilities, and update RUCS information on land use agricultural models that could increase financial viability.

As with economic development in general, in addition to funding gaps, often times there are existing resources that are not fully utilized due to information, networking, and access challenges and on the ground capacity to make connections and provide assistance. There are at least two existing resources for beginning farmers that can be better activated in order to benefit farm entrepreneurs in the region.

- 1) California FarmLink: a nonprofit that provides economic development support for beginning, limited-resource, immigrant and other underserved farmers across the state, including the Central Valley. Services focus on providing access to capital and land. Its **Land Access Program** maintains a farmland listing database of land available for lease or sale, connects farmers and landowners, helps them develop strong leases, and supports those seeking financing for land purchases. Its **Farm Opportunities Loan Program** provides flexibly structured farm financing to above types of growers for operating, equipment and infrastructure loans. FarmLink works closely with the USDA Farm Service Agency, banks, credit unions and other lenders to connect farmers with other sources of financing for land loans, serving as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) (<http://www.californiafarmlink.org/>).
- 2) The California Debt Allocation Limit Committee, California State Treasurer, has a **Beginning Farmer Program** that issues beginning farmer bonds. The bonds are used to back below-market interest rate financing for eligible agricultural land, construction/improvements, and equipment (<http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/cdlac/applications/applications.asp?app=farmer>).

Additional resources could be identified and better connected with a designated locus for this function. They include other CDFIs, small business development financing sources and corporate and philanthropic sponsors, for nonprofits.

Several years ago the RUCS project identified strategies to preserve farmland and support economic viability for growers, especially at the urban edge to address development pressures in transition zones. It would be valuable for RUCS to develop an updated “toolkit” of strategies and resources to benefit “working landscapes,” such as agricultural easements, carbon recapture and other ecosystem services that could provide increased revenue streams and financial stability for existing growers. As an ongoing part of RUCS, SACOG continues to develop and refine information on new crop markets and economics of shifting crop patterns. Support for expanded outreach capacity also would be beneficial.

Strategy 1.B:

Increase the pipeline of new growers and create career pathways across the entire education and training system.

A viable agricultural economy requires skilled growers, farm managers, and workers across a wide range of occupations. New employment and training opportunities, including entrepreneurship for new farmers and food-related businesses, hold exciting potential for the region, especially given the high level of interest in urban agriculture, healthy local grown and value-added specialty food and beverage products, and new agricultural technologies. It is also important to provide pathways out of poverty for low-income agricultural workers who provide our food, through opportunities for skills upgrading and entrepreneurship.

As noted earlier in the report, USDA reported that the average age of the American farmer is 58; for every farmer and rancher younger than 25 years of age, there are five over the age of 75.²³ This is a major challenge for the region. It is imperative to educate the next generation of farmers, a mission of the Center for Land-Based Learning and Soil Born Farms. In 2012 the Center created the California Farm Academy, providing a seven-month program for new farmers and a farm incubator for graduates (<http://landbasedlearning.org/farm-academy>). Soil Born runs an intensive apprenticeship program along with other training. These programs, while successful, must be increased in scale to meet the growing demand across the region, especially to manage urban farms and community and school gardens (<http://www.soilborn.org/index.php/farming/farming-apprenticeship.html>).

The regional economy also needs a comprehensive system of education and workforce development programs, including clear career pathways to support the food and ag sector across a wide range of in-demand occupations, from field labor to pest control advisors, nutritionists, crop scientists, business managers and the culinary arts.²⁴

In 2014 the region received \$21 million from the California Department of Education by the Career Pathways Trust, for CRANE, the Capital Region Academies for the Next Economy, and CAP, Capital Academies and Pathways, serving a combined 114,000 students at over 70 schools.

The partners in the initiatives include the region's school districts and community college district along with NextEd, and are working to enhance academic performance and career readiness in the Next Economy six industry clusters. The Center for Land-Based



²³ USDA, 2012 Census of Agriculture, published 2014.

²⁴ Next Economy: Workforce Development Recommendations for the Agriculture and Food Industry Cluster, prepared by Valley Vision for the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency, May, 2014.

Learning convenes the project's Agriculture, Natural Resources and Food Production Industry Roundtable with employers and other partners.

In July 2015 the Central Valley AgPlus Food and Beverage Manufacturing Consortium was designated an Investing in Manufacturing Community Partnership (IMCP) by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (www.cvagplus.org). IMCP provides an opportunity for preference in federal funding programs, including workforce and training resources in the food and ag career pathways, and for building upon successful pathways programs being developed in the San Joaquin Valley, including the Farm of the Future at West Hills Community College and Paramount Farm Academy, also a Career Pathways Trust project with major support from employers.

Assets: Center for Land-Based Learning, Soil Born Farms, NextEd, CRANE (Capital Region Academies for the Next Economy) and CAP (Capital Academies and Pathways) and participating school districts, Los Rios Community College District, Yuba Community College District, UC Davis, CSU Sacramento, Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA), Yolo Workforce Investment Board, Golden Sierra Workforce Investment Board, North Central Counties Consortium, SACOG, chefs, California Restaurant Association, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, Valley Vision

Recommended Action 1.B.i:

Expand existing farmer training programs to develop a coordinated approach at the regional level with models for accreditation and apprenticeship certification.

Increased investment in existing new farmer training programs is needed to bring capacity to scale across the region, to develop new models for accreditation in high-demand skills gap areas, and to support education, workforce and nonprofit partners to secure apprenticeship accreditation through the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency. This will result in increased education and training resources and deeper levels of training. Soil Born Farms and the Center for Land-Based Learning have been leading this important but challenging effort for the region.

Recommended Action 1.B.ii:

Identify key demand occupations and pathways models; add K-8 grade schools as feeders to high school career academies.

SACOG is conducting a new analysis of the Next Economy food and ag cluster to identify high job growth areas. Valley Vision and Los Rios Center for Excellence will coordinate with SACOG and NextEd to conduct a skills gap analysis for high demand occupations (funded by JPMorgan Chase). These efforts will provide timely information for the CRANE and CAP efforts and for the Workforce Investment Boards to develop new pathways curricula and linked learning opportunities. Partners could then identify a pilot K-8 school site to prototype serving as a feeder school for a specific high school career academy.



Model: West Hills Community College Coalinga Farm of the Future, with an extensive set of identified occupations and degrees and certificates in areas of high occupational demand, on a 213-acre site.

<http://www.westhillscollge.com/coalinga/academics/programs/farm/>

Strategy 1.C:

Support the development and deployment of new technologies that help food and agriculture adapt to changing environmental conditions, improve health, and compete globally.



Farmers and food and agriculture-related enterprises such as food processors must deal with increasingly complex environmental and regulatory requirements, including those related to land use, water, energy, chemicals and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to depleting ground water supplies and other negative economic and environmental impacts, the drought has strained energy use for irrigated agriculture due to increased groundwater pumping and heat.²⁵

The issue of food waste has received increased attention in the past few years. USDA estimates that up to one-third of the food available in the U.S. is wasted – 133 billion pounds of food.²⁶ USDA and US EPA recently announced a joint effort to reduce food waste nationally by 50 percent by 2030. A new state law goes into effect in April 2016 that will require jurisdictions, counties, and private businesses that generate “a specified amount of organic waste per week” to reduce their waste going to landfills.²⁷

Food waste happens at multiple levels. Food may be left on the field during harvest, wasted during the retail process, or thrown away in private homes and kitchens. Food waste contributes to methane emissions in landfills, which are the third largest source of methane emissions in the U.S. Reducing food waste was raised by stakeholders and cuts across all of the goal areas in this Action Plan. New technologies are being developed to use food waste to generate alternative fuel sources and for other uses. Many of these technologies are being developed at UC Davis and commercialized in the region, and are the focus of efforts to establish the region as a center of renewable fuels and clean technologies, especially linked to the food and agriculture economy.

The challenges described above present the potential to drive new economic opportunities in the region through a wide-ranging scope of ag tech innovations, such as for precision agriculture, soil improvements, seed technologies, food nutrients, conversion of food waste to renewable energy as noted, and new growing models (e.g., hydroponics and aquaponics). New technology applications also are being developed to help improve healthy food access and distribution and education about healthy eating and nutrition, especially for underserved communities. (See the reference in Recommendation 1.A.i for the Farmstand software platform that the city of West Sacramento is beta testing.).

²⁵ “Energy Use in a Time of Drought,” Adam Kotin, California Climate Action and Agriculture Network

²⁶ <http://civileats.com/2015/09/21/feeding-farms-with-supermarket-food-waste/>

²⁷ Assembly Bill 1826, http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB1826.

According to the Kauffman Foundation, California is one of the three main areas in the country where innovation in agricultural technology is on the rise.²⁸ UC Davis, AgStart and other organizations and businesses are collaborating to incubate and support ag tech entrepreneurs and businesses. Broadband (high speed Internet) is needed to utilize many of these technologies, which would help farmers become more resource efficient and reach markets more effectively. This would help get needed broadband infrastructure into rural, underserved and unserved communities. The development and adoption of these technologies can make the region a global center of innovation for sustainable agriculture; food storage, processing, and distribution; and nutrition and community health.

Assets: UC Davis's AgTech Innovation Center, World Food Center, Ag Sustainability Institute, and Venture Catalyst; AgStart, HM Clause Life Science and Innovation Center, Davis Roots, Yolo County, Greater Sacramento Area Economic Council, Slingshot Project, California Emerging Technology Fund, Code for America, AgTech Roundtable, Hacker Lab, USDA Rural Development California, California Department of Technology, California Public Utilities Commission, California Department of Food and Ag, farm bureaus, County Ag Commissioners, Sac Metro Chamber, ag tech businesses, Capital Region SBDC Network, city and county economic development agencies, Clean World

Recommended Action 1.C.i:

Support expansion of AgTech entrepreneurship programs.

The Sacramento region has many assets and partnerships at the local, regional, state, and federal levels primed to create momentum and inventions for technology solutions to address regional food system needs and global food, health and environmental challenges. In addition to the benefits described above, development of new technologies will help increase the economic viability of existing businesses and nonprofits through more efficient use of resources, and will help catalyze growth of new businesses and jobs.

As noted, UC Davis, especially the Sustainable AgTech Innovation Center (SATIC) and the World Food Center, AgStart and Yolo County are delivering programs and services to entrepreneurs and startups to develop, test and accelerate the adoption of new ag technologies. Some planned new activities are entrepreneur roundtables, start-up mentorship, and AgField Day tours. The California Emerging Technology Fund is supporting an AgTech pilot in Yolo County to measure the benefits of broadband-enabled technologies in reducing resource consumption and use of chemicals, and to document the case study of the increased public and private investments in broadband infrastructure in the region's underserved and unserved rural areas. Additional resources would allow for the expansion and scaling up of programs and services assisting ag tech entrepreneurs throughout the region.

Model: SATIC supports the commercialization of clean ag technologies by identifying and accelerating technologies that promote sustainability across a wide range of areas. It provides a virtual incubator of programs and services that include workshops, mentoring and access to capital, business

²⁸ "The New World of Ag," Allison Joy, Comstock Magazine, pp. 49-53, February 2015.

competitions, a prototype fund to test new technologies, and regional showcase events, in partnership with AgStart and Yolo County. <http://gsm.ucdavis.edu/satic>

Hackathons are a popular and creative way to connect technology with specific topics. These events bring together computer programmers, software and hardware developers, and community members to collaborate on developing software applications and/or for education purposes and award prizes for the best solutions. UCD World Food Center is planning an AgTech Hackathon in late 2015, the first in the region. The City of West Sacramento is interested in hosting an AgTech Hackathon, building on its experiences with Code for America and its focus as a “global food hub.” An AgTech Hackathon for youth would provide educational and career awareness opportunities, especially for girls and economically disadvantaged youth, in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) activities and for exposure to coding skills. Nonprofits such as Hacker Lab have sponsored successful hackathons and would be good partners for such events. Resources would be needed to sponsor these events, including for prize awards.

Model: Apps for Ag - AgTech Roundtable, Ag-Tech Hackathon, West Hills Community College, which brought together farmers and computer programmers and software developers to develop demand-driven tech applications. <http://www.westhillscollge.com/coalinga/academics/programs/farm/apps-for-ag.asp>

Goal 2: Increase the amount of locally-grown food distributed to the regional food system.

As noted earlier, much of the region's agricultural bounty is exported and most of the food consumed within the region by households, businesses, and institutions such as schools and hospitals comes from outside the region. The following is a summary of the key issues and needs identified as gaps in the local food system during the stakeholder input process. Combined with existing documented information and project research, this input helped identify priorities for the strategies and implementation recommendations in Goal 2. They focus on creating new infrastructure, market channels and procurement policies to increase the distribution of healthy, locally-grown, source-identified food to institutions and businesses, and provide new opportunities for growers, especially small to mid-sized farmers, to reach these markets. Gaps are closely linked to gaps in other goal areas.

LOCALLY-GROWN FOOD DISTRIBUTION GAPS

Gaps	Issues/Needs
Collaboration/Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consortia for food service directors of schools and hospitals to consult and collaborate with each other on sourcing local foods into their institutions • Local networks to share excess/available food • Lack of coordinated ag economic development agency
Financing/Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital investment and business development in cut and wrap fresh produce aggregation and distribution • Fair prices and sufficient revenues for farmers
Hub and Spoke Aggregation/Distribution Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need someone to run the hub • Distribution of fresh local produce to aggregate meal feeding sites such as Loaves and Fishes and churches • More distribution systems serving small-scale commercial enterprises
Incubators/Kitchens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More affordable options for incubator kitchens or other related space • Mobile cooking rigs
Markets/Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get local food into all retail environments • Clear definitions and branding of local, organic, etc. • Develop/expand marketing efforts for local foods • Develop markets for non-market quality crops
Policy/Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of Boards of Supervisors for communities to expand, diversify food and ag products • Ombudsman for urban ag and food processing at the county level • Coordinated permitting for food processing
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School district (will)power for farm to school • Restrictions on end-user to only purchase through certain vendors, eliminating local purchase options
Processing Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of existing processing facilities • USDA inspected meat and poultry processing • Fresh cut facility

Storage Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate cold storage for rent in ag distribution hub • Commercial refrigeration facilities and freezer space • Produce packing
Sustainability/Water/Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food waste (from production through consumption); recycling • Water efficiency
Transportation/Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband infrastructure/access • Transportation logistics, changes in international trade • Road maintenance/improvement in rural areas (farm to market) • Shared infrastructure for farms • Change in transportation laws effective 2016 for commercial drivers
Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade schools related to training for food handling or food processing • Career pathways/veterans support

The Sacramento region has a dynamic food system and is well-positioned to grow and strengthen its diverse food and agriculture industry through more localized aggregation, storage, processing and distribution of locally-grown food. However, SACOG conducted a major food hub feasibility study for RUCS in 2014 which identified, along with earlier studies, the lack of regional agricultural infrastructure as a major impediment to achieving this potential. In particular, the lack of mid-scale produce handling and processing capacity and poultry/livestock processing facilities is a constraint in meeting the increasing consumer demand for locally-grown foods, improving access to fresh produce – especially in underserved communities – and generating increased economic activity.²⁹ <http://www.sacog.org/rucs/>

Many institutional customers such as schools and hospitals purchase from suppliers and distributors that source food products nationally and globally. In addition to insufficient mid-scale agricultural infrastructure to connect growers and distributors to local markets, the RUCS project identified fragmented purchasing and procurement policies that make it difficult for growers, wholesalers and distributors to navigate disparate systems and meet complicated procurement requirements that are not geared to local purchasing. The RUCS project also identified a lack of dedicated market channels for locally-grown foods, especially to connect small to mid-sized growers with institutional customers who require large and consistent volumes of products.³⁰

Demand is growing from all types of consumers for locally-grown, sustainably-produced food, especially fresh produce. People want to know where their food comes from and they want to support local growers. This is and will be a sustained trend nationally and in California. For example, major policy efforts such as the UC Global Food Initiative and CSU Sustainable Food Policy are driving increased demand for procurement of locally-grown foods and will provide market support for local-serving agricultural infrastructure.

²⁹ SACOG – see Sacramento Region Food Hub Study Findings - <http://www.sacog.org/rucs/>

³⁰ RUCS Presentation, SACOG, Farm Fresh Healthcare Forum, Sierra Health Foundation, August 4th

Goal 2 has two core strategies:

- Goal 2.A: Establish a regional network of food hubs.
- Goal 2.B: Implement an institutional food procurement strategy.

Strategy 2.A:

Establish a regional network of food hubs.

The RUCS food hub feasibility study documented the strong need for developing a regional food hub network to aggregate, store, process and distribute different types of crops for different types of customers across the region. An analysis of total food consumption by county and the region found that almost 2 million pounds of food was consumed in 2012, with more than 1 million being fresh produce – demonstrating significant existing demand.³¹ An analysis of the gaps between what is consumed locally and what is grown locally shows additional strong market opportunity as well as the viability of a hub if developed.

The feasibility study includes detailed information and case studies of various hub models (nonprofit, for-profit, public, social enterprise), a business plan, pro formas and other materials for use by interested parties and investors. Given that the region is so large geographically and the demand is so large, several smaller hubs could be local serving and connect with a larger, more centralized hub that has greater aggregation, processing and distribution capacity. The proposed model for the hub, which includes value-added processing, could be adapted to include a commercial kitchen/culinary incubator and other facilities to support job training and startups, including microenterprises.

SACOG, Valley Vision and local partners have been presenting the food hub feasibility study findings to a variety of audiences across the region. Interest and support is high. The next steps are to build capacity to implement the feasibility study findings, develop a financing mechanism for hub development – including for expansion of local distribution companies with existing aggregation and distribution capacity, assess the potential for incubating the food hub(s) in one or more of the food banks, and implement an institutional procurement strategy that will strengthen the market support for the hub. This strategy also will provide new market opportunities for local distribution companies that have existing relationships with local growers as well as aggregation, packing, storage and distribution capacity and access to value-added food processors.

Model: Sacramento Region Food Hub Feasibility Study, SACOG RUCS project – research trends analysis with food hub models nationally, hub cost estimate analysis/engineering study, business plan, pro forma tool kit, Yuba County case study. <http://www.sacog.org/rucs/>

³¹ Sacramento Region Food Hub Feasibility Study, Project Summary, prepared by Applied Development Economics, Foodpro International, Inc., the Hatamiya Group and DH Consulting for SACOG, November, 2014, p. 3

Assets: SACOG, dedicated growers, consumers, chefs, local distribution companies, nonprofits such as the region's food banks, local jurisdictions, Farm to Fork, Valley Vision, institutions which are working to source more locally-grown foods and support the development of needed infrastructure, Cooperative Extension, farm bureaus, county ag commissioners, local economic development agencies, Sac Metro Chamber, Capital Regional SBDC Network, foundations, and state and federal partners including CDFA and USDA Rural Development California

Recommended action 2.A.i:

Build capacity to implement the RUCS food hub findings, and provide growers with information to shift/expand crop production for local markets.

Technical assistance and capacity building is needed to continue dissemination of the RUCS food hub feasibility study findings; convene public and private sector partners to identify potential projects and locations; provide assistance to local jurisdictions, food banks, food distribution companies, developers and nonprofits to adapt the feasibility study findings for the appropriate models; identify and coordinate with potential funders; and work on barriers to implementation. A complementary action is to increase the capacity of SACOG and others to expand the provision of information and assistance to growers on market opportunities to shift or expand crop production for the local food system, and to assist communities on needed infrastructure and other site location requirements for food hub development. The financing strategies and resources identified in Goal 1 could be a resource to assist growers with expanding acreage for increased production of crops for local markets.

Recommended action 2.A.ii:

Develop a financing mechanism for food hub development; leverage the potential to incubate the food hub(s) in the food banks.

SACOG, Valley Vision, nonprofits and local jurisdictions and other partners have been working to identify potential financing resources for food hub development, including from private sector and social impact investors, federal agencies, philanthropy and donors. One underutilized resource is the California FreshWorks Fund, a \$264 million public-private partnership loan fund created to finance grocery stores and other forms of healthy food retail and distribution in underserved California communities. The Fund model is based on the successful Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative and was seeded with a \$30 million investment and a \$3 million grant from The California Endowment, and subsequently has been fully capitalized by a cohort of banking and philanthropic investors.

The Fund provides a combination of loans and in some limited cases grants to grocers and distributors to help overcome the high costs of entering food deserts and to support innovations in healthy food retailing. As will be shown in Goal 3, there are many areas in the region that have healthy food access challenges that would meet the intention of the Fund. Technical assistance, coordination and capacity building is needed to help identify potential project developers and assist in securing funding, as there has been very limited investment in the Sacramento region.

Model: California FreshWorksFund – a finance fund for healthy food retail and distribution facilities in food deserts. <http://cafreshworks.com/about/>

The conclusion of the chapter presents additional recommendations on cross-cutting financing strategies, including creation of a healthy food financing fund, that will help address this and other goal areas and strategies.

As one aspect in a regional food hub network, the food banks do currently serve in a hub food role for their own clients and missions. They have been taking on new projects to expand their facilities and logistics to handle increased levels of food aggregation and distribution overall for aggregation, as well as for expanded cold storage and other capacity to as they move to a fresh produce model, and for complementary activities such as food preparation and training. As examples, in early 2015 the Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services (SFBFS) merged with the Senior Gleaners, becoming the food bank for Sacramento County, taking a major new facilities and greatly expanding the amount of food handled. These facilities require major renovations. The Yolo Food Bank is about to initiate a capital campaign to renovate a former industrial building it purchased last year.

Through the SACOG food hub feasibility study, SACOG has worked with the region's food banks to assess their interest in and potential ability to incubate other aspects of the food hub network, given their existing logistics capacity, partnerships with local growers, and plans for expansion of cold storage, aggregation, processing, and distribution capacity. This is a strategy, along with expanding partnerships with local distribution companies, that has been successful in other regions.

The first priority of the food banks is to serve their own missions. Resources are needed for the food banks to assess more fully the capacity, facilities and capital requirements to build their own hub-related infrastructure, and for project development, engineering and architectural studies, financing strategies and grant writing. Eventually, as the capacity of the food banks deepens, it would be useful to assess their potential to participate in the incubation or expansion of the food bank network across the region, including to serve institutional customers such as schools and hospitals, as well as other types of customers. The creation of a healthy food financing fund could be a potential long-term funding source for the food hub network along with other resources.

Strategy 2.B:

Implement an institutional food procurement strategy.

Hospitals, schools and other institutions including local governments represent a major opportunity to increase the amount of locally-grown foods they procure. Institutional procurement of locally-grown, source-identified foods is currently limited, siloed and uncoordinated. Expanding institutional purchasing would help increase food access in underserved neighborhoods, create healthier communities, and provide increased market opportunities and economic viability for local growers and distributors, including food hubs. As anchor institutions, hospitals and schools have major purchasing

power and can drive positive changes through the supply chain to provide healthier food to those they serve as well as the communities where they are located. This can also have a major economic impact.

Health Care Without Harm is an international coalition of hospitals and health care systems, medical professionals, community groups, labor unions, environmental health organizations and religious groups. Through Physicians for Social Responsibility in the Bay Area, partners are working with 160 hospitals in California (as well as with over 1,000 hospitals nationally) through its Healthy Food in Health Care initiative to increase the amount of local, sustainably grown, fresh food served in hospitals and other health care facilities. The program supports food services directors and works within existing distribution systems to minimize burdens on food services staff. Health Care Without Harm provides information and support to hospitals and health care facilities shifting to more local sourcing of produce, dairy, poultry and meats, especially organically grown. It is also convening schools, hospitals, supply chain businesses and community partners from key regions in California, building the foundation for a California Ed-Med Collaborative (CEMC) to collaborate on procurement of locally-grown produce.

Recommended action 2.B.i.:

Develop a health system local food procurement pilot and a partnership between the Sacramento region and the Health Care Without Harm Ed-Med Collaborative on joint procurement strategies.

Valley Vision and Health Care Without Harm convened a Healthy Food in Health Care Forum in Sacramento in early August 2015 to explore the interest on the part of the region's hospital systems to increase their purchasing of local sustainably grown produce. Health Care Without Harm profiled a successful Bay Area local and organic produce pilot it is implementing with six hospitals, along with the assistance of Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF). All major hospital systems participated in the forum and expressed interest in exploring a possible pilot project in the Sacramento region. Health Care Without Harm is moving forward with this work.

Model: Farm Fresh Healthcare Project How-To Guide, describing the process and results of the Bay Area hospital fresh produce procurement pilot - www.CAHealthyFoodinHealthCare.org

Recommended action 2.B.ii.:

Develop an inventory of school districts' procurement capacities and needs for locally-sourced foods.

As discussed above in Farm to School in the Nonprofit Organizations section, schools face challenges in food procurement policies and practices for sourcing locally-grown foods. Painfully detailed regulations and a low-cost purchasing priority make working with local growers difficult. Additionally, each district budgets and purchases autonomously, and there are 13 school districts in Sacramento County alone. Many school sites don't have proper kitchen facilities for scratch-cooking or, in some cases, to handle fresh foods. (See the Farm to School section for discussion about a central kitchen in Sacramento City Unified School District.) A first step in working towards local procurement for school districts is determining their needs. Valley Vision is currently working with CAFF to co-coordinate, along with the

Yolo Ag Commission, the regional Farm to School Network. With additional capacity, this vehicle could be used to develop this inventory.

Assets: Community Alliance With Family Farmers; Valley Vision; Yolo Farm to School; National Farm to School Network; school food procurement specialists; hospital systems; UC Davis

Goal 3: Increase access to fresh, healthy produce, especially in underserved communities.

Despite the wealth of agricultural production in the Sacramento region, many residents still suffer from food insecurity. According to estimates developed by California Food Policy Advocates and Valley Vision, over 500,000 people are food insecure in the six-county region.³² The following is a summary of the key issues identified as gaps during the stakeholder input process. Combined with existing documented information and research conducted for the project, this input helped identify priorities for the strategies and implementation recommendations in Goal 3. They are drawn from the six theme areas, and are particularly focused on opportunities to increase access to fresh, healthy produce, especially in underserved communities.

FOOD ACCESS GAPS

Gaps	Issues/Needs
Coordination/Connection of Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate efforts to leverage activities and minimize duplications • Increase hours of operation for food assistance programs
Food Affordability & Appropriateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients of the food assistance programs want to purchase healthy food but it is out of their reach • Access to culturally appropriate foods
Knowledge of Existing Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of existing resources among providers and clients
Pathways Out of Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food insecurity gets to behaviors beyond food access – affordability; healthcare access • Accurate understanding/assessment of needs, including undocumented people • Social justice and social determinants of health
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation to/from healthy food access points • Transportation for low-income in rural communities to other related needs (medical services, education, employment) • Access to summer food programs for youth • Ready to eat meals (healthy fast food) for low-income neighborhoods
Wages and Payments to Growers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair wages for laborers working in food processing and distribution • Paying farmers true costs of food production
EBT/CalFresh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded acceptance of EBT at farmer's markets to all markets • Expanded Market Match program across the region • Increased enrollment in CalFresh and other federal nutrition assistance programs

³² Data compiled from the California Food Policy Advocates' County Profiles as updated August 2015, for 2014. It is based on the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, using the California Health Interview Survey results to estimate the number of low income households that are food insecure. There are an estimated 225,000 households. <http://cfpa.net/county-profiles> Using the regional average household size of 2.62 person (per the Census), Valley Vision calculated that 589,500 persons could be estimated to be food insecure. Other data sources such as Feeding America and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation report on earlier time points and use different data sources and methodologies. Feeding America reported an estimated 381,000 food insecure individuals in 2013. Given the differences in these two estimates, Valley Vision used a mid-point to reach an overall 2014 regional estimate of approximately 500,000 persons.

Goal 3 has three core strategies:

- 3.A: Strengthen the emergency food assistance system in order to increase capacity to provide more food to those in need.
- 3.B: Provide funding to CalFresh outreach programs to increase the number of participants among those eligible for federal nutrition assistance programs.
- 3.C: Develop federal nutrition assistance benefits (CalFresh/WIC) healthy food incentive match programs by creating a long-term funding source and expanding accepted locations to include grocery stores.

These strategies will build capacity within the emergency food assistance system and help increase access to healthy foods among the neediest of our community.

Strategy 3.A:

Strengthen the emergency food assistance system in order to increase capacity to provide more food to those in need.

While the region has a large network of emergency food providers, additional resources are needed to better meet the needs of our most vulnerable populations and improve the overall efficiency of the system, which was handling more than 22.5 million pounds of food in early 2015.

According to Feeding America, a food bank is a “non-profit organization that collects and distributes food to hunger relief charities. Food banks act as food storage and distribution depots for smaller front line agencies... and rely on donors and volunteers to carry out day-to-day operations.”³³ A food pantry differs from a food bank in that a food pantry delivers directly to the community; a food pantry may have established relationships with other food pantries to share food donations, especially of perishable items. In some cases food banks may also deliver directly to the community, but their primary purpose in the emergency food distribution chain is to act as a storehouse for millions of pounds of food that go to food pantries. The graphic below demonstrates the flow of food within this system:



The region has four county food banks which serve more than 400 smaller food banks and food pantries, with a varying amount of coordination and capacity by geography. As noted in Chapter 2, the four county food banks serving the six-county region are: Food Bank of El Dorado County, Placer Food Bank,

³³ Feeding America: What Is A Food Bank? <http://www.feedingamerica.org/about-us/how-we-work/food-bank-network/what-is-a-food-bank.html>

Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services, and Yolo Food Bank.³⁴ They coordinate food distribution throughout their respective counties, and are all participants in Feeding America®, making them part of a network of food banks and food pantries across the country. This provides them with increased access to donations of surplus food from participating grocery chains, food manufacturers, and others along the food distribution chain. For example, in 2014, Placer Food Bank reports that it was able to leverage “each \$1 in cash donations to procure \$17 in groceries through Feeding America” food retail and manufacturing partners.

While 400 distribution sites is a significant number, most of the sites are not open daily, and many are open only one or two days each month. Capacity varies by site. Low staffing (mostly volunteer) limits the number of distribution days many food pantries are able to be open. There is little if any coordination about what days food pantries are open, even those within close proximity to each other. Many stakeholders report that clients have severe difficulties getting to access points during the month, and increasing levels of hunger toward the end of the month when federal nutrition assistance benefits run out. (CalFresh benefits are distributed within the first 10 days of the month.)

Lack of access to cold storage is another common problem for emergency food system providers. This decreases the likelihood of a site being able to distribute perishable items, limiting what they are able to offer in general to higher-calorie, lower-nutrient dense, highly-processed foods. If cold storage infrastructure is accessible, training in handling of fresh produce is required. Even larger food pantries that are open 5-6 days/week, such as the River City Food Bank in Sacramento and Elk Grove Food Bank, face infrastructure challenges, particularly with the increase in clients over the past 6-7 years. River City Food Bank, which serves 5,500 individuals per month, an 85% increase since 2008, lacks walk-in refrigeration and adequate truck capacity to handle the 18,000 pounds of food they pick up each week from the Sacramento Food Bank’s warehouse. This results in more frequent trips to the warehouse, increasing costs in transportation and staff time. Elk Grove Food Bank, which serves 4,500 individuals per month, has seen a 92% increase in clients in the past 6 years and has outgrown its current space. These stories were echoed throughout the region.

The four county food banks also have high needs for increased cold storage capacity and other facilities to expand fresh produce aggregation, packing, processing and distribution, especially if they are to ramp up delivery of fresh produce to their distribution sites. Their volumes of total food and fresh produce handled have increased. While the time points vary, the following information illustrates recent trends:

- **Placer Food Bank** – 5.9 million pounds of total food in 2011-12, 7.4 million pounds in 2013-14; 20% (1.2 million pounds) was fresh produce in 2011-12, with the volume continuing to increase.
- **Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services** – 4.4 million pounds of total food in 2013, 11.1 million pounds in 2015 (due to the merger and new role as food bank for Sacramento County); 34% (1.5 million pounds) was fresh produce in 2013, over 40% (nearly 5 million pounds) was fresh produce in 2015.

³⁴ Placer Food Bank also serves Nevada County.

- **Yolo Food Bank** – 1.6 million pounds of total food in 2008, 4.2 million pounds in 2014-15; 30% (<.5 million pounds) was fresh produce in 2008, and 24% (1 million pounds) was fresh produce in 2014-15. The volume of fresh produce increased by more than 200,000 pounds over the past year.

Sources: Information provided by the Food Banks, via communications and annual reports

Recommended action 3.A.i:

Work with food banks to support and increase the capacity of the emergency food system through: increasing the amount of cold storage facilities and other infrastructure needed to create more efficiency; capacity-building through needed training; and increased collaboration among partner agencies to provide more food to their communities.

Food pantries across the region face the common challenge of lack of access to cold storage. This prevents them from being able to carry adequate amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables as well as other perishable items such as dairy products. If cold storage infrastructure is accessed, training in food safety and handling will be required. The region should prioritize working with the food banks to identify pilot sites to develop this infrastructure. Criteria for pilot sites could include: number of clients served per month and projected number of clients served with additional capacity based on location; number of labor hours available by staff or volunteers at that site; availability of physical space for installation of cold storage; and food desert status, with a mix of urban and rural sites showing high levels of food access gaps.

Assets: Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services, Placer Food Bank, Yolo Food Bank, Food Bank of El Dorado County, Yuba-Sutter Gleaners Food Bank, River City Food Bank, Elk Grove Food Bank; Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, Placer Community Closet Coalition, Center for Land-Based Learning; Soil Born Farms, Farm Fresh to You, many other farms

Strategy 3.B:

Provide funding to CalFresh outreach programs to increase the number of participants among those eligible for federal nutrition assistance programs.

Many low-income residents in the region who are income eligible for CalFresh are not enrolled in this important federal nutrition assistance program. Some of these residents do not meet other eligibility requirements, but it is likely that many do. As shown in the Key Findings section of this report, the region as a whole leaves a large amount of federal dollars on the table by not enrolling more eligible individuals. Table 1 shows that all six counties in the region have increased the numbers of income eligible residents enrolled in CalFresh since 2009, and most have increased the percent of those enrolled as well, but there is still more work to do. Also, as there is churn in people coming in and out of the system in terms of eligibility, it is important to work with potential applicants beyond outreach activities.

Recommended action 3.B.i:

Increase funding to existing CalFresh outreach programs to support staff and needed training at these locations and to increase enrollment at other locations.

CalFresh is administered at the county level, generally by the county Department of Health and Human Services or equivalent agency. Other organizations conduct CalFresh outreach, which can include providing materials about the program and how to enroll, or having an outreach coordinator who helps residents determine their eligibility and to apply. Food bank distribution sites and food pantries are good locations for CalFresh outreach as a large number of their clients are eligible for federal assistance. Some of the larger food banks and food pantries also provide training to smaller sites to increase their capacity to help with enrollment.

Strategy 3.C:

Develop federal nutrition assistance benefits (CalFresh/WIC) healthy food incentive match programs by creating a long-term funding source and expanding accepted locations to include grocery stores.

Healthy food incentive match programs provide EBT³⁵ and WIC³⁶ users with matching funds for EBT/WIC dollars spent on fresh produce. The amount of the match varies, but is generally a 1:1 match with a limit of \$10-15. For example, the statewide Market Match program, coordinated by the Ecology Center in Berkeley, offers a match for federal nutrition assistance clients at over 150 farmer's markets around the state including six in Sacramento. The Yolo Bonus Bucks program, run by the Yolo County Department of Employment and Social Services, provides a match to users purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables at six participating grocery stores. These programs have been proven to increase the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables purchased by low-income residents throughout the state.³⁷

Coupled with purchasing at farmer's markets and at grocery stores that source from local farms, these programs also provide an additional market opportunity for local growers. However, organizations that run these programs must continually search for sources of funding. In Sacramento, the organizations that run these programs at farmer's markets run out of matching funds early in the farmer's market season each year because of the high rate of usage.

The federal Agriculture Act of 2014 (Farm Bill) includes funding for Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive grants (FINI) to support healthy food incentive match programs. The Ecology Center received a FINI grant in 2015 for \$3.7m over two years. The money was apportioned to members of their statewide Market Match Coalition, and a small portion (less than \$40,000) of those funds came to our region through Alchemist CDC, which runs the Market Match program at several area farmers' markets. Yolo County also received a \$100,000 FINI grant in 2015 to pilot the Yolo Bonus Bucks program. Other markets, such as the Mack Road farmer's market managed by the Sacramento Chinese Community Center, have scrambled to get additional funding from other grants and donors when initial funding from the FINI grant ran out. AB 1321 (Ting) creates the Nutrition Incentive Matching Grant Program,

³⁵ Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) is another name for CalFresh, the California program of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These programs were formerly referred to as food stamps.

³⁶ Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Provides federal money to states for food and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five.

³⁷ <http://marketmatch.org/impact/>

which establishes “a state framework to oversee funding of Market Match programs” and “would leverage state resources to streamline local program administration, and expand Market Match programs across a more equitable cross section of communities.”³⁸ AB 1321 (Ting) received legislative approval and is awaiting the Governor’s signature as of this writing.

While the Nutrition Incentive Matching Grant Program will be beneficial for the state in receiving federal dollars, a sustainable funding source for match programs in our region is still needed. The FINI grant program is still new and highly competitive and is only part of the solution. It can be leveraged to build our system, but cannot be relied on for long-term funding.

Recommended action 3.C.i:

Develop a sustainable funding source that increases the amount of matching funds available by expanding programs with scalable models.

Assets: Yolo Bonus Bucks; Alchemist CDC; Oak Park Farmer’s Market; Sacramento Chinese Community Center; SNAP-Ed

³⁸ California Legislative Information, Bill Analysis.

http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billAnalysisClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB1321

Goal 4: Increase consumption of healthy foods through access to food and nutrition education and knowledge.

As shown in Table 2, “Nonprofit Organizations Working on Healthy Food System Activities in the Capital Region by Activity Area,” there are numerous organizations providing food and nutrition education in the Sacramento region. Yet throughout this project there has been continual feedback about the need for more educational opportunities. Through our analysis following synthesis of stakeholder input, we found two areas that food and nutrition education programs could address to lead to long-term change. The first is the need for continuing education. Many food and education classes are a “one-shot” class rather than a continuing program. A longer program - for example, a weekly course that runs over a month or two - not only provides more knowledge, it supports the theory of habits that long-term change occurs through repetition. Programs such as Food Literacy Center and Health Corps provide curriculum that not only teaches, but reinforces healthy eating through repeated messaging.

Second, stakeholder input emphasized that educational programs should use food that is financially accessible, culturally appropriate, and physically accessible to the audience. For example, a weekly program with an intended audience of food pantry clients could build lessons around food the client is likely to receive that week. Additionally, the classes could leverage clients accessing the food distribution site by taking place there.

FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION GAPS

Gaps	Issues/Needs
Basic Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many people grew up with processed, microwavable food and don't know how to cook• There is still a lack of understanding about the relationship between food and overall health
Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make healthy eating a celebration• Preparing meals together can be family time no matter what the cost of the food
Food Affordability & Appropriateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clients of the food assistance programs need classes using culturally-appropriate and affordable foods• Families without adequate kitchen facilities need education about safe food handling and preparation• Nutrition education and cooking classes should include shopping skills
Nutrition Education in Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand nutrition education and gardening programs in schools to reach all students• Make nutrition education a core requirement

Goal 4 has one core strategy:

- 4.A: Create opportunities for food and nutrition education and garden programs at schools, churches, and other sites.

This strategy and the associated recommended actions will increase consumption of healthy food by building education and knowledge about food and nutrition and food preparation.

Strategy 4.A:

Create opportunities for food and nutrition education and garden programs at schools, churches, and other sites.

Food and nutrition education opportunities should be expanded at locations where people already congregate. By leveraging existing meeting spaces, outreach and transportation costs are reduced so that more funding can go directly to programming. Familiar places may also be more conducive to learning for some populations, such as children.

As discussed above, longer, continuing educational programs will not only impart knowledge, they also will have more of an effect on habit change. Workshops and one-time classes can still be beneficial for people unable to make a weekly commitment, but programs with continuing classes should be the focus, particularly programs geared towards children.

In addition to classroom and hands-on kitchen education, school gardens are an important tool for teaching nutrition education and science, as well as math, languages, and other subject areas. Students can also learn about science and good citizenship when composting is included in the garden. They learn about “ugly fruit” – what most fruit and vegetables look like, helping to reduce the idea of “seconds” and food waste.



However, maintenance of school gardens can be challenging. Many schools have a teacher or a parent who may champion the garden, bringing resources and encouraging other teachers to teach from the garden, but school gardens require a dedicated coordinator to maintain them, purchase resources, write grants, and coordinate use among classes and after school programs. Without this support, gardens fall into disrepair, particularly over the summer, and facilities staff do not always have the expertise or the budget to maintain gardens.

Models: Food Literacy Center www.foodliteracycenter.org ; Yolo Farm to Fork (school garden coordinator resources)

Recommended Action 4.A.i:

Expand programs that address long-term change and support a variety of programs working with different age and cultural groups.

Recommended Action 4.A.ii:

Support a school garden coordinator position at school sites or across sites.

School gardens provide educational opportunities across the curriculum as well as needed time outdoors for students. A school garden coordinator will be able to maintain the garden supporting facilities and maintenance staff, access resources to bring new funding into the school site, and support teachers in educational programming.

Assets: Food Literacy Center; Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op; SNAP-Ed; El Dorado County Ag in the Classroom; Farm to School Yolo; Soil Born Farms; Harvest of the Month; Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services; Yolo Food Bank; Placer Food Bank; Yolo Farm to Fork

Progress Metrics

Table 4 summarizes the Action Plan Goals, Strategies, and Recommended Actions and provides Progress Metrics to track over the first year. Baseline measurements will be recorded, with progress metrics for each year determined at the start of implementation. The metrics suggested in this table are tied to the first year implementation, and will contribute to longer-term outcomes such as reducing food insecurity or increasing the amount of food that is consumed from local sources.

Table 4. Summary of Recommended Actions and Progress Metrics

Goal#1: Ensure the viability of the food and agriculture economy at all scales		
Strategy	Recommended Action	Progress Metric
Strategy 1.A: <i>Increase access to financing and affordable land for existing and emerging farmers.</i>	<i>Recommended action 1.A.i:</i> <i>Inventory publicly and privately owned properties available to lease for urban farming by adopting and scaling up in jurisdictions throughout the region new civic technology platforms being prototyped.</i>	Inventory and digital map of publicly and privately owned lands available for urban farming completed for 3 cities
	<i>Recommended action 1.A.ii:</i> <i>Connect and assist existing and new farmers with financing resources to acquire farmland, expand operations and facilities, and update RUCS information on land use agricultural models that could increase financial viability.</i>	Organizational capacity in place to connect farmers with financing resources and farmland Updated RUCS toolkit on land use agricultural models completed

<p>Strategy 1.B: Increase the pipeline of new growers and create career pathways across the entire education and training system.</p>	<p><i>Recommended action 1.B.i:</i> Expand existing farmer training programs to develop a coordinated approach at the regional level with models for accreditation and apprenticeship certification.</p> <p><i>Recommended action 1.B.ii:</i> Identify key demand occupations and pathways models; add K-8 grade schools as feeders to high school career academies.</p>	<p>A coordinated regional farmer training program model approved for accreditation and apprenticeship certification</p> <p>Three career pathways programs developed for key demand occupations</p> <p>A pilot K-8 site identified to prototype a feeder school for a high school academy</p>
<p>Strategy 1.C: Support the development and deployment of new technologies that help food and agriculture adapt to changing environmental conditions, improve health, and compete globally.</p>	<p><i>Recommended action 1.C.i:</i> Support expansion of AgTech entrepreneurship programs.</p>	<p>Entrepreneur roundtables, start-up mentorships, and AgField Day Tour expanded to three counties</p> <p>Demonstration AgTech pilot completed with documentation of impacts</p> <p>Youth AgTech Hackathon held</p>
<p>Goal #2: Increase the amount of locally-grown food distributed to the regional food system.</p>		
Strategy	Recommended Action	Year One Progress Metric
<p>Strategy 2.A: Establish a regional network of food hubs.</p>	<p><i>Recommended action 2.A.i:</i> Build capacity to implement the RUCS food hub findings, and provide growers with information to shift/expand crop production for local markets.</p> <p><i>Recommended action 2.A.ii:</i> Develop a financing mechanism for food hub development; leverage the potential to incubate the food hub(s) in the food banks</p>	<p>Site location identified for a food hub</p> <p>One food hub project funded by California FreshWorks Fund; project and resources identified for food bank incubation of a food hub</p>
<p>Strategy 2.B: Implement an institutional food procurement strategy.</p>	<p><i>Recommended action 2.B.i:</i> Develop a health system local food procurement pilot and a partnership between the Sacramento region and the Health Care Without Harm Ed-Med Collaborative on joint procurement strategies.</p> <p><i>Recommended action 2.B.ii:</i> Develop an inventory of school districts' procurement capacity and needs for locally-sourced foods.</p>	<p>Farm to Hospital food procurement project underway, with Health Care Without Harm and CAFF</p> <p>Ed-Med Collaborative joint procurement project underway</p> <p>An inventory and understanding of local school food procurement needs that can be used to create a local food procurement strategy with the school districts</p>

Goal #3: Increase access to fresh, healthy produce, especially in underserved communities.		
Strategy	Recommended Action	Year One Progress Metric
Strategy 3.A: <i>Strengthen the emergency food assistance system in order to increase capacity to provide more food to those in need.</i>	<i>Recommended action 3.A.i:</i> Work with food banks to support and increase the capacity of the emergency food system through: increasing the amount of cold storage facilities and other infrastructure needed to create more efficiency; capacity-building through needed training; increased collaboration among partner agencies to provide more food to their communities.	Two or more pilot sites that have increased capacity to handle fresh produce and are providing more fresh produce to clients (lbs. of food) Four partner agencies with increased day of service per month
Strategy 3.B: <i>Provide funding to CalFresh outreach programs to increase the number of participants among those eligible for federal nutrition assistance programs.</i>	<i>Recommended action 3.B.i:</i> Increase funding to existing CalFresh outreach programs to support staff and needed training at these locations and to increase enrollment at other locations.	Increased enrollment in CalFresh
Strategy 3.C: <i>Develop federal nutrition assistance benefits (CalFresh/ WIC) healthy food incentive match programs by creating a long-term funding source and expanding accepted locations to include grocery stores.</i>	<i>Recommended action 3.C.i:</i> Develop a sustainable funding source that increases the amount of matching funds available by expanding programs with scalable models.	Sustainable funding source identified to provide healthy food incentive match programs at grocery stores and farmers' markets across the region.
Goal #4: Increase consumption of healthy foods through access to food and nutrition education and knowledge.		
Strategy	Recommended Action	Year One Progress Metric
Strategy 4.A: <i>Create opportunities for food and nutrition education and garden programs at schools, churches, and other sites.</i>	<i>Recommended action 4.A.i:</i> Expand programs that address long-term change and support a variety of programs working with different age and cultural groups. <i>Recommended action 4.A.ii:</i> Support a school garden coordinator position at school sites or across sites.	Increase in persons served through educational programs; eating choices improved to support healthy eating. Programs will have individual evaluation plans. School Garden Coordinator in place

Financing Strategies

This Action Plan is a regional investment strategy. Given the importance of the region's food and ag economy, the levels of need, and the innovative models that exist, the region does not have the level of investment from public, private and philanthropic sources that it should. The Action Plan is the opportunity for the region to garner and focus investment on our pivotal priorities, including improving the capacity of the nonprofit sector working on healthy food system activities.

A dedicated organizational function is needed to assist regional partners in identifying and successfully competing for these resources and increasing the visibility of regional food system investment opportunities. This will in turn help generate resources for Action Plan implementation. There are two cross-cutting financing strategies for developing financing mechanisms and catalyzing existing funding resources that would support Action Plan implementation across the four goals: convening of a regional funder's forum and development of a Healthy Food Fund.

Funders Forum

The Foundation will convene a **Funders Forum** of funders and potential investors from within and outside of the region and invite them to consider investing in regional strategies, models and initiatives. Participants will include philanthropic organizations; state, federal and other levels of governments; banks; Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs); hospital systems (especially related to their community benefit programs); social benefit organizations; nonprofits; and other institutions.

In addition to the Foundation's large network of funders and donors, over the past several months the project team identified and connected with several additional funders working in the food and agriculture arena. We also identified possible partners who expressed an interest in working with us to approach funders for joint projects, or to assist in accessing underutilized funds such as the California FreshWorks Fund and California FarmLink and other resources identified in the Action Plan. These partners include organizations such as Health Care Without Harm, which is seeking funding to do a healthy foods hospital procurement pilot in the Sacramento Region, and Feed the Hunger Foundation, which has worked closely with both the California FreshWorks Fund and California FarmLink on helping to increase utilization of these programs. Other partners, such as USDA Rural Development California, have begun to identify resources within USDA nationally, such as the Rural Opportunity Investment Team, and those working with philanthropy across the country who can contribute to the Forum.

On the region's part, more proactive and continual effort and dedicated capacity is needed to engage with funders and local partners on a consistent basis, gain an understanding of funding requirements, track new resources, and develop funding proposals and strategies to secure needed resources to implement the Action Plan. In addition to exploring specific project recommendations contained in the Action Plan, the Funders Forum will provide an excellent opportunity to explore models, strategies and potential partners that could lead to the development of a Regional Healthy Food Fund, which would provide for a long-term financing vehicle that could fund various aspects of the Action Plan.

Healthy Food Fund

The project team looked at several healthy food finance fund models nationally. The majority are loan programs, sometimes paired with grants. They are geared toward building facilities, primarily grocery stores and other types of retail outlets, including conversion of existing corner stores that help bring healthy foods to underserved areas/food deserts using existing infrastructure. An example is the California FreshWorks Fund, cited elsewhere in this report as a possible source of financing for the food hub network. The FreshWorks Fund is modeled after the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative, a public-private partnership. This successful program financed 88 projects with more than \$85 million in loans and grants, and ended in 2000 when all the funds were deployed.³⁹ The California FreshWorks Fund is underutilized in the Sacramento region.

Another model is the Fair Food Fund launched in 2012 by the Fair Food Network based in Michigan. The Fund provides financing and business assistance to entrepreneurial food enterprises that connect small to mid-size farms with consumers. The Network helps funders make strong investments, providing expertise in food system access issues, community organizing and public policy. To date the Fund has raised more than \$5 million primarily from foundations, with support from USDA and RSF Social Finance, an alternative banking enterprise. The Fair Food Network also manages other programs that provide incentives for purchasing healthier food with SNAP benefits.

Michigan Good Food Fund: A public-private partnership loan and grant fund created to finance healthy food production, distribution, processing, and retail projects for underprivileged communities throughout Michigan. Supported by the federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative and Michigan partners such as Fair Food Network, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Michigan State University's Center for Regional Food Systems, and many more foundations.

Goals: Increase access to healthy food to improve health for all residents and drive economic development and job creation.

Grant award size: \$50,000-\$150,000; Loan award size: \$250,000 minimum <http://migooodfoodfund.org/>

An optimum fund for the Sacramento region would have three components:

- An investment/financing mechanism with associated funds for infrastructure and new business planning and development, including food-related business accelerators and incubators (farms, culinary kitchens, AgTech, etc.), food hub infrastructure, and new business models for growing crops
- Grant funds for on-going food-related educational activities (garden builds, school gardens, food literacy, career pathways, etc.)
- Grant funds for on-going emergency food access activities (hubs, food banks, food closets, healthy food incentive match programs, etc.)

Successful models have attracted large scale public and private sector investment in underserved communities by providing loan and grant financing for healthy food retail, food hubs and other facilities, and have supported job training for youth and meals for local public schools. An adapted model could

³⁹ "The Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative," The Reinvestment Fund website.

support organizations working to improve education and food access, and provide technical assistance and capacity building.

As in other regions, foundations could provide seed funding and help capitalize a Sacramento Region Healthy Food Fund, using it to attract private investors and leveraging financing mechanisms such as the New Markets Tax Credit Program established by Congress to increase business investments and real estate projects located in low-income communities. Administered through the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the program has been successfully used in other regions to support healthy food enterprises. A particular highlight should be on creative new models that are emerging for starting, supporting and financing local food businesses, as profiled by the National Good Food Network and others.

Implementation of these financing strategies would help generate new levels of more integrated investment in the food system's organizational, infrastructure and programmatic capacity to reach scale and impact matched to the region's needs and opportunities, and for sustaining efforts over the long-term. Effectiveness of these strategies will be based on proactive efforts to catalyze existing underutilized resources, as a starting point.

IV. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Conclusion

This Food System Action Plan is the first to be created for the six-county Sacramento Region. As shown throughout the report, the regional food system is big, complex and dynamic. The analysis documents the large disconnects that exist in our food system given the great abundance of our food and ag economy, how little of this abundance makes its way directly to markets and consumers within the region, and the reality that many in our communities suffer from high, chronic levels of hunger and food insecurity and limited access to fresh, locally grown healthy foods. As well, it chronicles the great opportunities the region has to address these challenges, leverage our expanding innovative food system assets, and create a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable regional food system.

The Action Plan identifies several priority areas that are actionable – work that can be accomplished if we all work to our strengths with shared purpose. While the Action Plan provides an integrated framework that links the specific strategies and recommended actions of its four major goals, implementation needs to focus on the areas where we can connect the greatest need with the greatest impact and where we can accelerate the excellent and innovative work that is already going well. The Action Plan provides the roadmap for this work.

The development of the Action Plan has made clear that there is a great deal of momentum for this work and support for the collaboration, coordination and investment needed to bring food system goals to fruition. There are many willing partners, including the Champions Committee, ready to carry the work forward, as well as important roles for each of the partners to play. We need to show progress and ensure that our leaders and communities are engaged across the region. The nexus will be in how we work together moving forward.

Significant qualitative and quantitative research has gone into creating the goals, strategies, and recommended actions for the Plan. Several “firsts” are contained in the report, including:

- Food desert maps overlaid with the emergency food distribution sites, and an analysis of the capacity needs of the emergency food provider network as it moves to a fresh produce model;
- Inventory of nonprofit organizations working to create a healthy food system for all, by number engaged and type of activity;
- Identification of multiple federal food nutrition program resources that could be greatly expanded to bring more dollars to our farmers, distributors and others, and provide greater levels of healthy food to those in need; and,
- Asset and Gaps analysis from input from more than 250 food system stakeholders and expert advisors, across all dimensions of the regional food system.

These products, along with the report’s other findings and analyses, guided the development of recommendations and are our baseline and resource as the region moves toward implementation.

Next Steps

The Action Plan is being launched in September 2015 during the Farm to Fork celebration. The completion of the report signals the conclusion of Phase I of the Food System Action Plan's three-phase project. The Foundation will continue to play a convening and leadership role and will take on a focused direct investment role based on alignment of Action Plan recommendations with its own regional food economy strategic initiative. The Champions Advisory Committee has embraced the Action Plan and its leadership will be activated in the ensuing phases of the plan to ensure action.

Moving forward together with the Champions Advisory Committee in convening and leadership, the Foundation will also take action in the areas that further its vision to support a strong economy, help people live with dignity, build a strong nonprofit sector, and flourish through the strength of the region's diversity. Given its role, scope and size, the emergency food system network of food banks and service providers will be a key priority, through possible investments in organizational and infrastructure capacity to handle expanded levels of overall volumes of food and of fresh produce and to achieve much higher levels of coordination and efficiency to meet the needs of the most food insecure populations in our region.

The immediate next steps for Phase II are:

- Disseminate the Action Plan through the communications networks of the Foundation, Valley Vision and others partners, including briefings for elected officials, civic and community organizations, nonprofits and other interested parties;
- Activate the Champions Committee to take a leadership role in implementing Phases II and III;
- Convene the Nonprofit Forum and the Funder's Forum in late 2015 and early 2016, respectively.

An Action Plan coordinator is needed to optimize the implementation of the Action Plan as it moves into Phase II. The coordinator will help connect and convene the partners and food system stakeholders; oversee the progress of the Plan; support local organizations, agencies, nonprofits, farmers and businesses; share information; and raise the visibility of the region.

Over the course of the coming year, the following activities should occur:

- Engage strategic partners in implementation of the Action Plan.
- Set up the metrics system and identify data to be collected for the tracking system. Track the progress of action recommendations as implementation begins. Develop annual metrics, taking into consideration where investments are being directed.
- Conduct research to fill key data gaps. For example, in order to increase institutional procurement of locally-grown foods, better understanding is needed of procurement policies and practices by schools, hospitals and local governments. Identification of emerging models, best practices, policy innovation and funding opportunities is another area of research to be conducted, followed by communication of these findings to the community and to implementation partners.

- Identify emerging issues of relevance and areas of opportunity that will affect the implementation of the Action Plan and suggest future areas of potential action and investment.
- Continue to convene and connect food system stakeholders and interested partners. The Action Plan coordinator will need to facilitate networking, convening, and communications on food system innovations and funding sources as well as respond to requests for information. This is a way to keep the momentum building for the Action Plan.
- Report back to the community and Champions Committee on the progress of the Action Plan.



SACRAMENTO REGION
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The Sacramento Region Community Foundation has been the trusted steward of charitable assets, a community catalyst for meaningful change and the advocate for shaping vital impact through philanthropy since 1983. As the center of philanthropy in the Sacramento Region, the Foundation's mission is to transform our community through focused leadership and advocacy that inspire partnerships and expand giving.

For more information, contact Amy Eubank, amy@sacregcf.org, 916.921.7723



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Since 1994 Valley Vision has strengthened communities through research, collaboration and leadership. Valley Vision is a social enterprise focused on economic, environmental and social issues. Our vision is a prosperous and sustainable region for all generations.

For more information, contact Robyn Krock, robyn.krock@valleyvision.org, 916-325-1630.

Appendices

Appendix A: Methodology

Appendix B: List of Participants

Appendix C: Nonprofit Organizations Working on Healthy Food System Activities

Appendix D: Nonprofit Organizations' Activity Areas Defined

Appendix E: Glossary of Terms

Appendix A: Methodology

This project was initiated in February 2015. Valley Vision used a variety of processes, data, and information sources to understand the region's current conditions, gaps, assets and opportunities, and identify strategic food system goals, strategies and actions. This included direct input and perspectives from approximately 250 stakeholders representing diverse aspects of the regional food system. There was a high level of enthusiasm for and interest in the project.

A Project Management Team comprised of board members and staff of both the Foundation and Valley Vision provided overall project management and review. A Champions Advisory Committee was formed to provide strategic guidance, help with outreach, and vet project findings. Members of the Committee were chosen based on their expertise, community leadership, networks, geographic and sector representation, and engagement in activities at the regional level. A list of Project Management Team and Champions Advisory Committee members is shown at the beginning of the report. Valley Vision also briefed the Foundation's Community Impact Committee over the course of the project, receiving valuable input and guidance.

Valley Vision brings many years of experience working across key aspects of the food system, including coordination of the Sacramento Region Food System Collaborative, management of the Next Economy Prosperity Plan Food and Ag Cluster strategy, and expertise in community health needs assessments, food and ag career pathways, food hub feasibility assessment, school breakfast programs, broadband-enabled ag technologies, working landscapes and institutional fresh produce procurement strategies. This experience, along with a strong network and ongoing collaboration with key regional food and ag partners, including elected officials and state and federal partners, provided a strong analytic and programmatic foundation for the project.

Building on this foundation, Valley Vision generated both quantitative and qualitative information from a variety of sources and methods. Primary data was gathered through stakeholder focus groups, key informant interviews, briefings, large convenings, site visits with federal officials, and leveraging of existing meetings. Outreach for the focus groups within Sacramento County included food and agriculture-related groups, such as the Sacramento Hunger Coalition, Sacramento Urban Ag Coalition, Sacramento Food Policy Council and members of the South Sacramento Building Health Communities Healthy Food Access Team. Additional outreach was done in the form of an online survey. Focus groups in other parts of the region were coordinated through partners in those areas in order to draw on their knowledge of key local actors. These were held in El Dorado, Placer and Yolo Counties.

Large convenings included a forum of the Sacramento Region Food System Collaborative and launch of this project in May at Shriners' Hospital, a Yuba-Sutter food system forum held in Marysville in July, and a forum on hospital procurement of local healthy foods – Farm Fresh Healthcare Forum – in partnership with Health Care Without Harm in August at the Sierra Health Foundation. Most of the briefings were requested by community and regional leaders including SACOG and the Sacramento Metro Chamber and were indicative of the overwhelmingly positive response to the project. A list of participants across

the events, focus groups, and interviews is included in Appendix A. The leveraging of existing meetings included meetings of the emergency food providers in Sacramento and Yolo counties and community forums on hunger convened by Capital Public Radio and Village Square Sacramento (a project of Valley Vision). Several hundred people participated in these meetings.

Research included review of many food system studies; reports and data on specific issues such as hunger and food insecurity, financing, food hubs and food procurement strategies; and identification of successful models, pilots and lessons learned here and in other regions. Valley Vision also prepared a first ever analysis of the lead nonprofit organizations working on healthy food system activities, developing an inventory of the organizations working across a spectrum of activities to identify existing assets and potential gaps and areas for improved effectiveness. SACOG prepared maps of areas throughout the region that indicate areas of potential food access challenges, overlaid with the location of emergency food provider points of distribution/access with data provided by the Food Bank of El Dorado County, Placer Food Bank, Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services, and Yolo Food Bank.

Information was gathered from key informants across the region in areas of work related to transforming the food system, including emerging areas of opportunity. Early in the consultation process, six core themes emerged and were validated and used throughout the project to organize subsequent stakeholder input on identifying food systems gaps and assets:

- Agriculture/Production
- Ag Infrastructure
- Economic Prosperity
- Healthy Communities
- Marketing/Awareness
- Sustainability

Appendix B: List of Participants

Name	Organization
Roger Abe	Supervisor, County of Yuba
Bob Adams	UC Davis World Food Center
Cecilia Aguiar-Curry	Mayor, City of Winters
Dominic Allamano	Soil Born Farms
Kimberlee Alvari, RD CNSC	Washington Hospital
Nicholas Anicich	Sacramento Charter High School
Barbara Archer	Farm Fresh to You/Capay Organic
Michael Arndt	UC Davis Medical Center
Rangineh Azimzadeh Tosang	Solh Resolutions International
Elizabeth Baca	Governor's Office of Planning and Research
Josh Baggett	Sodaro Orchards
Sara Baggett	Sodaro Orchards
Garett Ballard-Rosa	SACOG
Mary Barker	County of Placer
Leilani Barnett	Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco
Miguel Barraza	Food Production Professional
Thaddeus Barsotti	Farm Fresh to You, Capay Organic
Sandy Bassett	AT&T
Chris Benedict	Yuba County Environmental Health
Thomas Bennett	United Way California Capital Region
Brandon Bentz, MD, FACS	Fremont Rideout Memorial Hospital
Ami Bera, MD	U.S. Representative, California's 7th congressional district
Ricky Bettis	
Michael Bilton	Dignity Health
Jerry Birk	Fremont Rideout Memorial Hospital
Wayne Bishop	Bishop's Pumpkin Farm
Veronica Blake	Placer Community Foundation
James Brady	Con10u2farm L ³ C
Marlia Braun	UC Davis Medical Center
Nathaniel Browning	California School Boards Association
Sandra Bullock	UC Davis Medical Center
Joan Burke	Loaves & Fishes
Robert Burris	Burris Group
Deane Bussiere	Morrison Healthcare
Courtney Cagle	Public Health Institute
Shosha Capps	UC Davis
Rosie Cerna	Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services
Hui Sze Sarah Cheung	CSUS
Libby Christensen	UC Davis
Andrea Clark	Downey Brand
Jacqueline Clemens	Yolo Ag and Food Alliance
Alex Cole-Weiss	Community Development Graduate Group, UC Davis
Janice Cooper	California Wheat Commission
Jack Coots	SARTA/AgStart
Mark Crews	Councilmember, City of Galt
Paul Cultrera	Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op

Linda Cutler	Sacramento Region Community Foundation
Steven Dambeck	Yuba Harvest
David De La Pena	UC Davis
Diane Del Signore	Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Sean Denny	Councilmember, City of Woodland
Joe Devlin	Office of Councilmember Jay Schenirer
John Donlevy	City of Winters
Davida Douglas	Alchemist CDC
Dawn Dunlap	Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op
Tatiana Dykes	County of Solano
Margaret Ecklund	Sodexo/Rideout Medical Center
Sharon Eghigian	Sacramento Region: NeighborWorks
Jill Eglund	United Way of Kern County
Priscilla Enriquez	Sacramento Region Community Foundation
Amy Eubank	Sacramento Region Community Foundation
Gail Feenstra	Davis Farm to School; Community Food Systems
Eric Fierro	Aramark
Maria Finn	Local Bounty
Karen Firestein	USDA Rural Development California
Chris Flores	Office of Congresswoman Doris Matsui
Dan Flores	Supervisor, County of Sutter
Nicodemus Ford	
Randy Fletcher	Supervisor, Yuba County
Nancy Freitas	Sutter Roseville Medical Center
Shiva Frentzen	Supervisor, El Dorado County
Kari Fry	Palladian Consulting
Kathy Gallino	County of Sacramento
Kara Gash	County of Sutter
Debbi Gibbs	Office of Congressman John Garamendi, Third District
Dmitri Godamunne	
Scott Graves	Aramark / Dignity Health North State
Mary Jane Griego	Supervisor, County of Yuba
Clare Gupta	UC Davis
Lynn Hanna	CSUS
Sarah Hanson	California Dept. of Food and Ag, Farm to Fork
Jeff Harris	Councilmember, City of Sacramento
Shawn Harrison	Soil Born Farms
Lon Hatamiya	The Hatamiya Group
Gary Hawthorne	North Yuba Grown
Pamela Henderson	Sacramento Region Community Foundation, Board of Directors
Chet Hewitt	Sierra Health Foundation
Ken Hiatt	City of Woodland
Mei Yee Ho Ho	CSUS
Jeannie Howell	Sacramento Region Community Foundation
Elizabeth Hudson	The Salvation Army in the Western USA
Glenda Humiston	USDA Rural Development California
Clif Hunt	North Highlands Christian Food Ministry
Josh Huntsinger	County of Placer

Roger Ingram	UC Cooperative Extension
Chris Johnson	
Paul Joiner	Councilmember, City of Lincoln
Tom Kandris	PackageOne
Trish Kelly	Valley Vision
Patrick Kennedy	Supervisor, Sacramento County
Charity Kenyon	Kingbird Farm, Slow Food Sacramento
Kristin Kiesel	UC Davis
Andrew Kim	Office of Congressman John Garamendi, Third District
Mary Kimball	Center for Land-Based Learning
Erik Kintzel	Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services
Kendra Klein	Health Care Without Harm
Robyn Krock	Valley Vision
Edye Kuyper	UC Davis World Food Center
Natalie Lanning	Breathe California of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails
Kenneth Larson	Placer Community Foundation
Aaron Laurel	City of West Sacramento
Mary Ellen Leciejewski	Dignity Health
Kristine Lee	
Erica Lee	Health Education Council
Kristy Levings	County of Yolo, Farm-to-School
Neal Liggins	LocalStar
Joseph W. G. Livaich	Renew Financial
Dennis Mangers	Sacramento Region Community Foundation
Andrew March	Office of Congressman Garamendi, Third District
Pepper Martin	Sierra-Arden Neighborhood Food Closer
Dave Martinez	Placer Food Bank
Amber Masoni	G.L. Mezzetta, Inc.
Malinda Matson	U.S. Dept. of Commerce
Jack McElvein	Mercy General Hospital
Mike McKeever	SACOG
Craig McNamara	Sierra Orchards
Louie Mendoza	Yuba County Agriculture Department
Matt Mentink	Logistics
Linda Merksamer	Sacramento Region Community Foundation
Jim Mills	Produce Express
Charlotte Mitchell	Sacramento Farm Bureau
Patrick Mulvaney	Mulvaney's B&L
Jason Murchison	Sodexo/Fremont Rideout Memorial Hospital
Joanne Neft	Author, Community Food Guru
Thomas Nelson	Capay Valley Farm Shop
Dennis Nelson	Developer
John Nicoletti	Supervisor, County of Yuba,
Lorilee Niesen	Sacramento County Office of Education
Judy Nottoli	California Air Resources Board, Office of the Ombudsman
Don Nottoli	Supervisor, County of Sacramento
Mary Odufuwa	Health Education Council
Brooks Ohlson	Sacramento Regional Center for International Trade Development

Jeri Ohmart	UC Davis; Davis Farm to School
Rosanna Oliva	Public Health Institute
Sahra Pak	County of Solano
Diane Parro	County of Yolo/City of Davis
Michael Paul	River Highlands
Dean Peckham	City of Sacramento
Clair Peeters	Kaiser Roseville
Danica Peterson	County of Sacramento
Rocky Peterson	
Paul Philley	Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District
John Pickerel	Buckhorn Steakhouse
Carol Pranka	USDA Rural Development
Mark Quisenberry	Sutter County Agriculture Commissioner
Christina Ragsdale	Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District
Matt Read	Sacramento Urban Ag Coalition
Kathleen Reed	Kaiser Permanente
Adrian Rehn	Valley Vision
Todd Retzliff	Sutter County
Kelly Rivas	Office of Congressman Ami Bera, M.D.
Judy Robinson	County of Sacramento
Yvonne Rodriguez	County of Sacramento
John Rogers	County of Sacramento
Nicole Rogers	Sacramento Convention & Visitors Bureau, Farm-to-Fork
Susan Rohan	Mayor, City of Roseville, SACOG Vice Chair
Patty Rominger	Winters Farm-to-School
Scott Rose	Produce Express
Karen Ross	Secretary, California Dept. of Food and Ag
Carla Rosin	Santa Barbara Food Bank
Brenda Ruiz	Sacramento Food Policy Council
Judy Sala	Elk Grove Food Bank Services
Lillian Salerno	Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA
Mabel Salon	UC Davis, Government & Community Relations
Ricky Samayoa	Mayor, City of Marysville
Kevin Sanchez	Yolo Food Bank
David Sander	Councilmember, City of Rancho Cordova
Don Saylor	Supervisor, Yolo County, SACOG Board Chair
Lucia Sayre	Health Care Without Harm
Jay Schenirer	Councilmember, City of Sacramento
Ted Schettler, MD MPH	Science & Environmental Health Network
Fred Schluep	Our Smart Farms
Evan Schmidt	Valley Vision
David Shabazian	SACOG
Rikki Shaffer	Yuba-Sutter Chamber of Commerce
Steve Sibilsky	
Val Siebal	County of Sacramento
Rubie Simonsen	WayUp Sacramento
Ron Slater	Buzz Saw Studio
Beth Smoker	Sacramento Urban Ag Coalition

Dave Snyder	Placer County Office of Economic Development
Laurie Somerhausen	County of Yolo
Ruth Soto	420 MVL
Aaron Soto-Karlin	Harvest Sacramento
Tom Stallard	Mayor, City of Woodland
Kristine Stanfill	Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation
Martin Steiner	Hefner Law
Michelle Stephens	County of Yolo
Jeff Stephens	Stephen's Ranch
Betsy C Stone	Community member
Amber Stott	Food Literacy Center
Karen Strach	Yolo Food Bank
Claudia Street	Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau
Katharina Streng	California Department of Public Health
Briana Struckmeyer	Visit Yuba-Sutter
Velma Sykes	Sacramento Area Women's Chamber of Commerce
Peter Tateishi	Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce
Tim Taylor	Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District
Renee Taylor	Northern California World Trade Center
Mike Testa	Sacramento Convention and Visitors Bureau
Ben Thomas	UC Davis Dining Services
Eileen Thomas	River City Food Bank
Tawana Thompson	Dignity Health
Christine Tien	The California Endowment
Joany Titherington	NeighborWorks Sacramento, Oak Park Farmer's Market
Paul Towers	Pesticide Action Network
Robert Tse	USDA Rural Development
Martin Tuttle	City of West Sacramento
Brian Veerkamp	County of El Dorado, Supervisor
Wendi Vela	UC Davis Medical Center
Naomi Voosen	Raley's
Janice Waddell	USDA Rural Development California
John Walti	
Terry Wardley	Office of Assemblymember James Gallagher
Rabbi David Wechsler-Azen	Fresher Sacramento
Robert Weygandt	County of Placer, Supervisor
Colleen Whalen	Sacramento Food Policy Council
Aubrey White	
Kate Wilkins	Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services
Sarah Williams	Food System 6
Kim Williams	Sacramento Building Healthy Communities
Tiffany Wilson	LPC Consulting Associates
Ian Winbrock	City of West Sacramento
Michelle Woo	Solano County Public Health
Chris Worden	Sacramento Metro Chamber
Molly Wright	Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District
Breanne Wroughton	California Farm Academy
Vue Yang	Sacramento Covered

Chamayo Yniguez	UC Davis Health System
Celia Yniguez	Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency
Blake Young	Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services
John Young	County of Yolo
Jennifer Zachariou	Dignity Health

Appendix C: Nonprofit Organizations Working on Healthy Food System Activities

Organization/ Program	Project Areas/Activities																	
	Community Gardens	Corner Store Conversion	EBT Healthy Food Incentive Match	Farm-to-School	Farmers' Markets	Food Access	Food Distribution	Food & Nutrition Education	Food Safety	Food Waste	Gleaning	Home Gardens	Hunger Awareness	Marketing/Awareness	Policy	School Gardens	Urban Agriculture	Workforce Development & Education
Alchemist CDC		X	X		X	X		X					X	X	X		X	
Asian Resource Center													x					X
BeMoneySmartUSA					X	X		X										
Capay Valley Vision														X				
Capital Academies and Pathways (CAP)																		X
Capital Region Academies for the Next Economy (CRANE)																		X
Cares Community Health								X										
Center for Land-Based Learning						X	X	X					X	X			X	X
Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF)				X			X	X	X					X	X			
Community Resource Project							X	X										X
Dairy Council of California						X		X						X	X			X
Davis Farm to School				X		X	X			X						X		
Davis Farmers' Market				X	X	X												
Delta Grown														X				
Edible Sac High								X								X	X	
El Dorado County Ag in the Classroom								X										X
Elk Grove Food Bank						X	X						X					

	Project Areas/Activities																	
Organization/ Program	Community Gardens	Corner Store Conversion	EBT Healthy Food Incentive Match	Farm-to-School	Farmers' Markets	Food Access	Food Distribution	Food & Nutrition Education	Food Safety	Food Waste	Gleaning	Home Gardens	Hunger Awareness	Marketing/Awareness	Policy	School Gardens	Urban Agriculture	Workforce Development & Education
Farm to School Yolo				X	X	X		X							X	X	X	
Food Bank of El Dorado County						X	X						X					
Food Literacy Center				X	X	X		X		X			X					
Foothill Farmers' Markets					X	X												
Fresher Sacramento					X	X	X	X										
Green Restaurants Alliance of Sacramento (GRAS)										X				X	X			
Health Care Without Harm						X		X										
Health Corps								X						X	X			
Health Education Council	X				X	X		X						X		X		
Loaves & Fishes							X											
Luther Burbank High School Garden								X								X		
Mutual Assistance Network						X	X											
Neighbor Works Sacramento					X													
NextEd																		X
North Yuba Grown						X								X				
Oak Park Farmers Market			X		X	X												
Pesticide Action Network														X	X			
Placer Food Bank	X					X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X		

	Project Areas/Activities																	
Organization/ Program	Community Gardens	Corner Store Conversion	EBT Healthy Food Incentive Match	Farm-to-School	Farmers' Markets	Food Access	Food Distribution	Food & Nutrition Education	Food Safety	Food Waste	Gleaning	Home Gardens	Hunger Awareness	Marketing/Awareness	Policy	School Gardens	Urban Agriculture	Workforce Development & Education
Placer Food Closet Collaboration						X	X	X					X	X				
Placer Grown														X				
RISE Inc.						X	X	X					X					
River City Food Bank						X	X											
Sacramento Chinese Community Center					X			X				X				X		
Sacramento Food Bank						X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X
Sacramento Food Policy Council															X			
Sacramento Hunger Coalition						X		X					X					
Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op						X		X						X				
Sacramento Urban Ag Coalition															X		X	
Slow Food Davis								X										
Slow Food Sacramento						X		X						X		X		
Slow Food Yolo				X		X		X				X						
Soil Born Farms				X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
United Way						X		X					X					
WayUp Sacramento								X										
Woodland Farmers' Market					X	X												
Yisrael Family Farm						X		X	X		X	X	X				X	X
Yolo Farm to Fork				X												X		
Yolo Food and Agriculture Alliance															X			

	Project Areas/Activities																	
Organization/ Program	Community Gardens	Corner Store Conversion	EBT Healthy Food Incentive Match	Farm-to-School	Farmers' Markets	Food Access	Food Distribution	Food & Nutrition Education	Food Safety	Food Waste	Gleaning	Home Gardens	Hunger Awareness	Marketing/Awareness	Policy	School Gardens	Urban Agriculture	Workforce Development & Education
Yolo Food Bank					X	X	X	X			X		X	X				X
Yuba-Sutter Gleaners Food Bank, Inc.						X		X			X							
Total:	2	1	2	7	13	32	20	32	3	5	5	5	15	19	12	9	8	12

Source: Valley Vision, 2015

Appendix D: Nonprofit Organizations' Table Activity Areas Defined

The following describes the activities listed in Table 3 and Appendix C.

Community Gardens

Community gardens are places where people can come together to grow their own food, increasing healthy food access in some communities, providing culturally appropriate foods in others, and creating a safe outdoor space in which people can build a sense of community. The exact number of community gardens in the Sacramento region is difficult to calculate. Anecdotally, there are numerous communities that have developed community gardens in vacant lots or communal areas, such as at apartment complexes or church sites.

Included in Table 3 are organizations that have developed community gardens and/or are engaged in helping communities develop additional ones. However, some of the best known community gardens are run by the city of Sacramento. The City runs 13 gardens ranging in size from 6 plots to 40+; most include 2-3 ADA plots.⁴⁰ The City has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in these gardens. They require soil testing, secure fencing and gates, water access, clear pathways, and tools. Community gardens differ from urban agriculture – defined further below – in intent and operation. Community gardens are non-commercial enterprises. Gardeners grow food for personal use or to share within their community, but not for significant commercial use.

Corner Store Conversions

Corner stores are small retail establishments that often carry basic food supplies, such as bread and milk, less nutritious food such as snack foods and candy, as well as liquor and cigarettes. Assisting these small businesses where they exist in food deserts to improve their healthy food offerings is a strategy that has been tried in areas around the country. By partnering with business owners, community advocates can use these existing businesses to get fresh fruits and vegetables into low-income communities.

The work generally entails assessing existing infrastructure and adding/replacing refrigeration, etc. where required; training staff on handling of fresh produce; determining best distribution methods (i.e., working with a local food distributor or working directly with a local grower); and marketing and education. This can be a complex process, as well as a costly one if new infrastructure is needed. In our region, Alchemist CDC is currently partnering with three different stores in the South Sacramento area in their Healthy Convenience Store Makeover program.

EBT Healthy Food Incentive Match

Healthy food incentive match programs provide CalFresh EBT⁴¹ and WIC⁴² users with matching funds for EBT/WIC dollars spent on fresh produce. The amount of the match varies, but is generally a 1:1 match

⁴⁰ Americans With Disabilities Act. ADA plots are garden beds raised to the height of wheelchair accessibility.

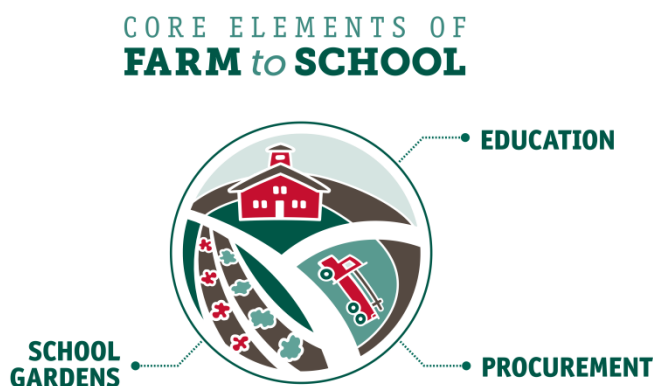
⁴¹ Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) is another name for CalFresh, the California program of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These programs were formerly referred to as food stamps.

⁴² Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Provides federal money to states to for food and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five.

with a limit of \$10-15. In Sacramento County these programs are run at farmer’s markets. A Yolo County program administered by the county Department of Employment and Social Services, includes fresh produce purchased through federal nutrition assistance programs at several participating grocery stores. Goal 3 includes a recommendation for increasing funding to the match programs and provides detail about how the programs work, where support currently comes from, and how to increase their effectiveness.

Farm to School

“Farm to school” programs can have multiple components. As depicted in this graphic from the National Farm to School Network⁴³, a farm to school program might include school gardens; education about food and nutrition, or related subjects such as biology and agriculture; and locally-sourced procurement for school meals. School gardens and farm to school programs are counted separately in the inventory to show organizations that are combining school gardens with other areas of farm to school.



While there are dedicated individuals and organizations working on farm to school programs, each of the three areas of farm to school faces barriers to implementation. Perhaps the most challenging is procurement because of the complexity of regulations that school food procurement specialists

must navigate. Regulations do not allow for prioritizing “local”, and locally-sourced food is not necessarily the least expensive even though it may be the freshest and most nutritious. Regulations specify the exact quantity each student must receive of different kinds of produce, the exact quantity that must be served of different categories of fruits and vegetables, the exact amount of protein per student, and so on. Smaller school districts are more nimble in navigating these requirements than larger districts.

Schools also face infrastructure barriers in providing healthy meals to students. Many schools do not have full kitchen facilities. They have infrastructure to store and re-heat prepared, frozen meals. The city of Sacramento passed a bond in 2012, Measure R, which would provide funds to construct a central kitchen for the Sacramento City Unified School District so that the Nutrition Services Department can prepare meals using scratch cooking and fresh foods. In this case, the centralization of this process would be less expensive and less cumbersome than preparation at each school site. This infrastructure is required to operationalize increased procurement of locally-grown foods.

⁴³ www.farmtoschool.org

Farmer's Markets

The Sacramento Region has a wealth of farmer's markets. Because of the climate, the region is able to have year-round farmer's markets, although the number of markets, and the number of vendors at some markets, is reduced during the winter months. Certified farmer's markets only work with farmers who have been certified by the state to grow the produce they are selling, and only the farmer (or their representative) can vend at the farmer's market. Most of the farmer's markets in Sacramento County are run by one for-profit operator. In the past few years, other markets have been developed. Not all farmer's markets in the region are nonprofit and only nonprofit markets are counted in this inventory.

Food Access

Food access organizations are those defined as being engaged in on-the-ground work that increases access to healthy food. For example, food banks, farmers' markets, urban farms, and growers groups are included. Organizations working to increase access to healthy food in other ways—which includes most of the organizations in this inventory—are included in their respective areas, such as policy or education.

Food Distribution

Organizations engaged in food distribution are food banks, farm to school programs, and other organizations that distribute food directly to clients for a reduced or no fee.

Food & Nutrition Education

The food and nutrition education category has one of the highest numbers of organizations. This activity area could be further broken down into types of education, such as "age of population served" or "workshops or ongoing classes" or "cooking focused or nutrition focused". These variations are discussed further in Goal 4. One of the main sources of nutrition education in the region – SNAP-Ed – is not included in the inventory because it is a federally-funded program run by local government agencies. SNAP-Ed provides funding to state and local agencies to deliver education to SNAP (CalFresh) users. The form that takes varies by county. Some of the nonprofits on the table receive some of this funding through grants from county agencies because they have the expertise and technical resources to provide this education.

Food Safety

The food safety category includes organizations engaged in teaching compliance with food safety laws and regulations. These laws affect food handlers at all stages including growing, harvesting, packing, holding, and distribution. Certification is required at various stages and farms are required to have food safety risk prevention plans in place.

Food Waste

Food waste is a national problem. Estimates suggest that up to 40% of the food in the U.S. is wasted, most of it going to landfills. Research and development has resulted in technologies that turn food waste into a useful resource, including composting and biodigesters, the latter of which convert large amounts of organic waste into energy. Composting is not a new technology, but our understanding of the process by which food waste benefits healthy soils has grown. Composting is generally done in smaller quantities than biodigesting and does have some limitations in that not all food waste can be

used for composting. Because of the nutrients added to the soil from the composting process, using compost for gardens and urban agriculture reduces the amount of fertilizers and plant growth additives needed. Organizations in this category not only use but also teach composting, or, in the case of Green Restaurant Alliance (GRAS), provide composting services as a business.

The region is a center for developing new technologies to convert food waste to energy. Several nonprofits such as the Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services provide food waste to recycling companies that use the waste for biodigesters.

Gleaning

Gleaning refers to the act of getting “leftovers” or seconds. In the context of food, it has historically been used to mean picking or gathering edible food that the farmer has left on the field. It is now also used in an urban context to gather edible food growing in urban environments that would otherwise go to waste. For example, Harvest Sacramento, a project of Soil Born Farms, gleaned over 90,000 pounds of fruit in 2014 from neighborhood fruit trees on public and private land around Sacramento. The majority of this fruit was donated to food banks. Gleaning is also used to mean food gathered from grocery stores that would otherwise become waste. Food banks and food closets often have arrangements with grocers to collect this food on a regular basis. This activity is discussed in more detail in Goal 3.

Home Gardens

Organizations engaged in constructing home gardens for residents or providing resources to residents who want to build their own gardens is another food production strategy. Most of the work being done in this area is new; however, the organizations listed in this inventory are engaged in some area of food access/hunger advocacy work. For example, Soil Born Farms and Yisrael Family Farm have collaborated to create We Diggitt Urban Gardens. We Diggitt builds home gardens at no cost to residents in The California Endowment’s Building Healthy Communities (BHC) South Sacramento communities.

Hunger Awareness

Organizations working on increasing access to healthy food in underserved communities are, by proxy, often raising awareness about hunger in our communities. The organizations marked in this category are directly engaged in this work. For example, the Sacramento Hunger Coalition, a coalition of organizations working to alleviate food insecurity, engages in raising awareness about hunger as its main activity. They do this through activities such as organizing a lobbying day during Hunger Action Week in May and arranging events throughout the year. They have worked with county officials to increase CalFresh outreach in Sacramento County. (Information about the increase in CalFresh enrollment is included in the Current Conditions section of this report.)

Marketing/Awareness of Agriculture in the Region

The Sacramento region is home to a bounty of agricultural production. Sacramento Convention and Visitor’s Bureau’s America’s Farm to Fork Capital, and local agricultural branding groups such as Placer Grown, Capay Valley Grown, Delta Grown, North Yuba Grown, and Apple Hill are marketing this bounty both internally and externally, bringing visitors to the region and increasing economic activity. There is a need to raise awareness of this bounty within the region. Many people still don’t know about the importance of agriculture in the region to health, the workforce, the environment and the economy. In

addition to the above, other organizations help to raise awareness of the importance of agriculture to our region, such as the Center for Land-Based Learning's numerous programs and Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF). It is important to note that this category focuses on marketing and raising awareness about the bounty and value of agriculture in the region, and not directly about other aspects of the food system.

Policy

Many organizations engage in advocating for policies that support a healthy food system, but some are specifically dedicated to this work. Policy efforts in the region ranges from very local policy, such as the Sacramento Urban Ag Coalition, which helped obtain passage of the Sacramento Urban Agriculture Ordinance by the city of Sacramento, to the Yolo Ag & Food Alliance and the new Sacramento Food Policy Council, both of which have seats on the statewide California Food Policy Council. Being the state capital, Sacramento is home to numerous industry lobbying groups; these are not included in this table as their focus is not on our region, or on a section of our region, but rather on the whole state.

Additionally, not all of these are 501(c)(3)'s. For example, the California Rice Commission is a state statutory organization, established through state legislature.

School Gardens

Many school sites have gardens with varying levels of use and maintenance. Most of these were set up and run by a committed parent, teacher, or staff person. Some were created and are managed by an organization, or have an arrangement with an organization through which they receive some resources. The organizations in this category either support one or more school gardens or are actively working to develop additional ones. Also included are sites that are noteworthy on their own for their size or level of engagement by students, such as Luther Burbank High School and Edible Sac High School. Goal 4 includes additional information about school gardens. It is worth noting that, while there is some overlap with the farm to school category, many of the organizations included in the school gardens category are focused solely on school gardens rather than other aspects of farm to school. (See definition of "farm to school" above.)

Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture differs from community or home gardening in the intent for the commercial use of the product. The intent of urban agriculture or urban farming is to grow a product to sell for income, as opposed to community or home gardening in which the intent is to grow food for personal consumption or to share within their community. Included in this inventory are organizations which are actively engaged in urban farming, such as the Center for Land-Based Learning and Soil Born Farm, or actively engaged in supporting the existence or expansion of urban farming, such as the Sacramento Urban Ag Coalition.

Workforce Development & Education

The average age of farmers in the U.S. is estimated to be 58 years old.⁴⁴ While some farms are passed down from generation to generation within the same family, more people raised in rural areas have

⁴⁴ 2012 Census of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2015

chosen urban lifestyles over managing larger, rural farms. Many farmers must work off farm to generate adequate income levels. If the region is to keep producing food for ourselves and others, educating the next generation of farmers must be a priority. This includes secondary agricultural education as well as programs for adults. Additionally, as the average age of the workforce in general nears retirement, other types of jobs within the food and ag sector must be filled with adequately-trained staff. The organizations included in this category are engaged in developing a trained pool of workers and business owners for the food and ag sector.

Appendix E: Glossary of Terms

The following is a brief glossary of terms frequently used in discussions and writing regarding food and agriculture from a holistic level. It is important to remember that many of these terms are defined through usage and may vary by context.

Agricultural Value Chain: The Agricultural Value Chain represents everything involved in the creation of food from production—including seeds and the equipment and services involved in farming—to aggregation, processing, packaging, distribution, consumption and waste.

CalFresh: CalFresh is the state-run program for distribution of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as “food stamps”. The program is sometimes referred to as EBT (electronic benefits transfer). CalFresh recipients receive a plastic card, similar to a bank debit card, from which they are able to draw down on the funds in their federally-assigned account. Merchants must have a point-of-sale (POS) system that accepts EBT. EBT cards may also be loaded with funds from other federal assistance programs, such as WIC (women, infant, and children).

EBT: Electronic Benefits Transfer; *See CalFresh*

Farm to Fork: Drawing on what is seen is the beginning of the food cycle (farm) to the end of the food cycle (fork), farm to fork generally refers to programs, businesses, or other initiatives creating a shorter distance from where food is produced to where it is consumed. (This definition leave food waste out of the cycle.) In Sacramento “Farm to Fork” has special meaning. In 2012, a group of chefs, elected officials, and others branded Sacramento as “America’s Farm-to-Fork Capital”. This regional identity has been embraced widely by restaurants, farmers, and other local businesses.

Farm to School: Refers to programs that focus on getting locally-sourced, fresh produce into schools. These programs range from the USDA’s Farm to School program to productive school gardens, but generally refers to efforts to connect local growers to school food purchasers.

Farmgate: This is the net value of crops when they leave the farm and reflects the price sold by the farm, before additional value is added from shipping, handling, storage, marketing and profit margins of other activities. The overall value of the agricultural economy in the region starts with but greatly exceeds the farmgate value.

Food Desert: A food desert is a geographic area with no or insufficient access to fresh produce, although there may be access to food considered to be less healthy, such as fast food and snack food sold at convenience stores. There is no standard for how food deserts are measured although measurements must take into account issues other than food sources such as accessibility of transportation, within a spatial framework such as lack of access to a supermarket or large grocery stores within a specified distance of one’s residence. In our region, SACOG conducted a study in 2012-13 measuring food deserts. This study is discussed further in Goal 3 of this report.

Food Hub: The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines a food hub as a “business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products, primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail and institutional demand.”⁴⁵ Food hubs can include processing functions. They can be for-profit, nonprofit or a cooperative. Food hubs are discussed in more detail in Goal 2 of this report.

Food Insecurity: Per a USDA report, food insecurity is defined as “a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food” as compared to hunger defined as “an individual-level physiological condition that may result from food insecurity.” Food insecure households generally experience uncertainty about their ability to access enough food for the entire household at some point during a given month. Food insecurity in the Capital region is discussed further in the Current Conditions section of this report.

Food Literacy: The Food Literacy Center defines food literacy as “understanding the impact of your food choices on your health, the environment, and our community.”⁴⁶ Others define food literacy as enough knowledge to make healthy eating choices.

Food Procurement Policies: As part of strengthening local food systems, there is an effort to look at food procurement policies of governments and major institutions such as schools and hospitals. Local food procurement policies encourage government and other local institutions to purchase locally-grown foods. This is sometimes expressed as a goal to source a certain percentage of food produced within approximately 100 miles of the consumer. Policies often are geared to the lower cost rather than a buy local preference.

Food Safety and Traceability: Traceability is the ability to track any food through all stages of production, processing and distribution, including retail. Traceability allows government, food businesses and consumers to target the produce affected by a food safety problem. Food safety and quality have become increasingly important world-wide in recent years, not only in terms of protecting the health of the consumer and ensuring food security, but also to meet requirements for international trade. Smaller growers in particular sometimes require assistance to conform to meet standards. The Food Safety and Modernization Act being implemented by the FDA will require new levels of capacity by growers and food processors.

Food System: Generally defined as the cycle of food and agriculture simplified into five components: production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste. It includes all processes and infrastructure involved in these components.

Food System Collaborative: A collaborative of nonprofits, businesses, growers, and others in the Sacramento region strengthening the network of organizations and individuals working to create a healthier, equitable food system.

⁴⁵ James Barham, et al, “Regional Food Hub Resource Guide,” USDA, Agricultural Marketing Services, April 2012, p. 4.

⁴⁶ <http://foodliteracycenter.org/what-is-food-literacy/#sthash.6btvjKtf.dpuf>

Food Waste: Food waste is food that is disposed of and cannot be used. Causes of food waste are numerous. Food waste can occur on an individual level—for example, food in the home that rots before consumption—or an institutional level. Examples of the latter include food disposed of by grocery stores because of expiration dates or restaurant food that is not consumed and cannot be reused. Food waste may also include the loss of food during production and post-harvest although this is sometimes also referred to as “food loss”. According to the U.S. EPA, 35 million tons of food waste reach landfills and incinerators each year.⁴⁷ In our region, a variety of organizations and businesses are working on this issue including Green Restaurant Alliance of Sacramento (GRAS) and Clean World. Food waste is discussed further in the Nonprofit Organizations section of this report.

GAP Certification: Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices (GHP) are audits and certifications that recognize a grower or processor adheres to USDA’s recommendations on the production, packaging, handling, and storage of food in a way that minimizes risks of microbial food safety hazards.

Local Grown: Refers to the provenance of an item as being within a certain geographic range from consumer purchase. There is no official standard to what constitutes “local”. The term is often defined as 100, 150, and 200 miles, however, “California-grown” is sometimes also referred to as “local” for marketing purposes. Additionally, the range considered to be “local” might be expanded in urban areas not near agricultural production, or areas that don’t have a year-round growing season.

RUCS: The Rural-Urban Connections Strategy conducted by SACOG is the region’s rural economic and sustainability strategy complementary to the Blueprint, the region’s overall growth strategy. RUCS provides a range of planning and analytic tools that support the region’s rural communities and strengthens the agricultural sector within a framework of the overall regional economy.

SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; *see CalFresh*

Source-Identified Produce: The source – the farm – of the produce sold is known to the consumer.

Urban Agriculture: For the purposes of this Plan, urban agriculture refers to food grown in an urban environment for the purpose of generating income. In common usage it may include community gardens to private urban farms, although local governments are increasingly defining it by distribution (household consumption versus community consumption) and/or food produced for sale rather than sharing with friends and neighbors.

⁴⁷ <http://www.epa.gov/wastes/conservation/foodwaste/>