

Food For Us – Community Initiatives

History and background of the 18 initiatives – (Feel free to skip to page 2 for those who prefer a quick read) As stated during the Summit, there were intentional steps taken to ensure our efforts amounted to more than merely an event, but contribute to growing the food movement in a broader context. One element was to bring together nearly 30 key stakeholders dubbed “The Round Table Partners.” As a component of the Summit preparation, the Round Table Partners shaped a community survey which explored the gaps, opportunities, current initiatives underway and future initiatives which may be key to long-term success.

The Future Initiatives section of the survey was also shaped by three additional efforts: the sharing of initiatives identified by members of the Tallahassee Food Network; initiatives identified by community members at Cornbread & Collards meetings; and a focus group held by the Leon County Office of Sustainability last year, in which members of various community groups participated. Each of these four efforts involved input and voices from diverse segments of our community, adding to the collective voice. These four sources yielded nearly 40 potential initiatives that would eventually be included in the community survey.

In an effort to pare down the list the Round Table partners completed the survey themselves and also recommended an additional 70 entities or individuals who are actively contributing to the food system who should also receive the survey. Out of the 100 individuals, 65 responded to the survey, in part prioritizing the 40 future initiatives. (I warned you this may be more detail than some of you wish for).

From the community survey, all initiatives receiving at least 75% support were brought to the Summit attendees as a component of the GROW group exercise resulting in the 18 initiatives you see below. There is never a perfect way to go about an effort like this, especially given the reality of limited resources, however thought and effort of dozens of community representatives went towards devising the 18 initiatives.

These initiatives belong to the community and action going forward will be carried out and “owned” by you. As expressed during the Summit, Leon County is honored to have served the role of convener and looks forward to being one among many partners to bring these various initiatives to life. The Round Table Partners will soon gather together to reflect on all 18 initiatives, and discuss possible next steps. If you would like to contribute to one or more initiatives below, please share your interest with the Tallahassee Food Network (TallahasseeFoodNetwork@gmail.com) as your time, talents and treasures are valuable.

Summit Ranking of Initiatives - Eighteen initiatives were identified by the community through a pre-Summit survey. At the Summit, each table scored a selection of six of the 18 initiatives, with each table having a different set of six to work with. Summit participants scored the six items using the GROW criteria: how much will this initiative GIVE the community? What RESOURCES are required? How OBSERVABLE will its success be? How WILLING am I to co-create this initiative?

The scores were then compiled for each initiative and results averaged. Leon County thanks all those who contributed! Here is the rank order of the initiatives:

1. HEALTHY FOOD EDUCATION. *Strongly integrate the topic of healthy food consumption in public school curriculums.*
2. COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK. *Create a county-wide network of associations to promote and develop community gardens.*
3. GARDENS IN SCHOOLS. *Create gardening programs in area schools.*
4. COMMUNITY FOOD PLAN. *Develop a comprehensive Community Food Systems Plan for our community.*
5. COMMUNITY GARDEN LAND TRUST. *Establish a community garden land trust to obtain property for garden projects.*
6. YOUTH AG PROGRAM. *Develop a county-wide youth agricultural development program in order to help create the next generation of farmers.*
7. FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY. *Develop more food self-sufficiency models, creating intermediary steps between food pantries/charity and full price markets.*
8. LOCAL FOOD IN SCHOOLS. *Strive to enlist local education institutions in purchasing locally and regionally grown food.*
9. FOOD POLICY COUNCIL. *Establish a Food Policy Council to prioritize and implement policies promoting local food development.*
10. INCENTIVIZE LOCAL FOOD. *Incentivize local businesses to participate in the local food movement, including through the purchase of more local food.*
11. EBT ACCEPTANCE. *Work to assure that Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards are accepted at all farmers markets.*
12. GOOD FOOD DIRECTORY. *Develop a Community Good Food Directory—an online and paper directory of local food resources, from food organizations to farmers and food outlets .*
13. FAST HEALTHY FOOD. *Develop an initiative to make healthy food as easily accessible as fast food.*
14. MUNICIPAL COMPOSTING. *Develop an integrated municipal composting operation that supplies the needs of local gardeners and growers while reducing waste.*
15. FOOD HUB. *Organize and implement a food hub—a central processing facility where farmers and retailers can coordinate processing, distribution, and sale of locally grown produce; create a strong program to promote its use.*
16. HEALTHY FOOD STRATEGIC PLAN. *Devise a strategic plan to increase healthy food consumption in neighborhoods, providing culturally relevant food information and education outreach.*
17. CRA FUNDING. *Broaden the goals of Tallahassee's Community Redevelopment Agency to include human capital development—including food projects—along with the current emphasis on bricks and mortar.*
18. COTTAGE INDUSTRY SUPPORT. *Develop an initiative to enhance the development, processing, and distribution of new local food products/small cottage industries.*