

Food Systems Language in Comprehensive Plans

Cass-Clay Community Snapshot

May 2021

Introduction

Food systems is a broad term used to describe the elements and processes of how food moves from farm to table. It is an extensive term that covers many topic areas between the time food is grown to how food waste is handled. As explained in the "Incorporating Food Systems Language into Comprehensive Plans Issue Brief", working to strengthen a local food system can have many implications in a community, both short and long term. It is important to address food systems planning in community comprehensive and growth plans as these plans play a significant role in guiding the future development of a community. Including food systems related language and actions in a comprehensive plan can help a community make strides to improve food access and sustainability.

Identifying food systems recommendations and strategies within a comprehensive plan can help guide partners in addressing community food related issues. Since the topic of food systems is broad, it can be addressed in an array of areas within a plan, including land use, transportation, economic vitality, and agriculture. Some plans also use more recognizable food systems terminology, such as community gardens, urban agriculture, and farmer's markets. When assessing a local plan for work in the area of food systems, it is important to look through each section of the plan to identify actions and recommendations aimed at strengthening the food system.

Below is a list of local comprehensive plans (*in order of date completed/updated*) and a brief summary of how and where food systems issues are addressed or included in each plan. A link to each plan is included, as well as the pages where food systems language can be found.

Cass-Clay Comprehensive Plans

Fargo Go2030 (2012)

https://download.fargond.gov/0/_go2030_comprehensive_plan_-_final.pdf

Healthy Food - p. 150-153

The Fargo Go2030 plan is the area's first to mention food in one of its guiding principles related to health. The Healthy Food section recommends the development of a regional food systems plan (*the Metropolitan Food Systems Plan was completed the fall of 2013*) and the formation of a food council or commission to address local food policy issues (*the Cass Clay Food Commission was formed March 2015*). The plan also calls for establishment of zoning codes and land use policy that supports local food production and urban agriculture activities, as well as farmer's markets and community gardening opportunities in neighborhoods. It also encourages transportation infrastructure that increases equitable access to healthy food and recommends incentives to strengthen food entrepreneurship.

Cass County Comprehensive and Transportation Plan (2018)

<https://www.casscountynynd.gov/home/showpublisheddocument?id=5324>

Food Systems - p. 54-57, 134-135; Land Use - p. 69-84 including Emerging Land Use topics - p. 74 and opportunities - p. 82

The Cass County Comprehensive and Transportation Plan includes a complete Food Systems section addressing food production, processing, distribution, etc. The plan encourages working to assure healthy food access in rural areas and partnering with the Cass Clay Food Partners to address food systems issues. The land use section addresses farmland preservation and agriculture as well as emerging issues such as animal feeding operations. The plan includes a number of implementation strategies related to incorporating the needs of urban agriculture and the local food supply into model ordinances as well as establishing and maintaining pollinator habitats.

Dilworth 2045 (2018)

https://www.cityofdilworth.com/vertical/sites/%7B9D58D3D1-B683-400A-88F4-CEAF0C059D1B%7D/uploads/DilworthCompPlan_2018_Final.pdf

Agriculture - p. 64; Community Gardens & Farmers Markets - p. 70; Local food support – p. 80

The Dilworth 2045 comprehensive plan addresses the importance of farmland preservation as well as support for community garden opportunities and maintaining a farmer's market. It includes a recommendation to support sustainability efforts and local food opportunities and encourages working with community members for ways to improve healthy food access and promote equity and health.

West Fargo 2.0 (2018)

<https://www.westfargond.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2073/West-Fargo-20-Comprehensive-Plan>

Groceries & Dining - p. 38, 112; Farmer's Markets - p. 98; Community gardens – p. 136

The West Fargo 2.0 plan encourages recruitment of a variety of dining and grocery opportunities and to consider including these in mix-use walkable areas. The plan mentions support for the local Farmer's Market and recommends exploring opportunities for an indoor market venue in the off season. It also makes reference to small scale community gardens within one of its subarea studies.

Casselton 2045 (2019)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a5fc163d55b412c123050d6/t/605c9d7df9cbdf417eb45f28/1616682389353/Casselton+2045+Comp+Plan.pdf>

Agriculture – p. 64; Community Gardens & access to fresh produce – p. 69; local food support – p. 95-95

The Casselton 2045 addresses farmland preservation as well as support for a potential community garden in the near future. The plan recommends the support of local and fresh food access opportunities, including encouraging local food retailers to offer more fresh and seasonal produce year-round.

Horace 2045 (2020)

<http://cityofhorace.com/DocumentCenter/View/1093/Horace-2045-5-5-2020>

Economic/Food related business – p. 123; Community Gardens & Pollinators – p. 125

The Horace 2045 comprehensive plan encourages partnering with the Cass Clay Food Partners to support food-related businesses and pursue activities that both improve healthy food access and advance economic development. The plan recommends the establishment and maintenance of community gardens, in addition to reviewing the management of locally owned public land and taking steps to establish and expand pollinator-friendly landscapes.

Onward Moorhead Comprehensive Plan (Currently being updated)

<http://www.cityofmoorhead.com/home/showdocument?id=134> (2009 plan)

The City of Moorhead is in the process of revising their comprehensive plan which was last updated in 2009. Check out the latest information regarding the plan revision, including public input opportunities, on the city website at <http://www.cityofmoorhead.com/departments/community-development/planning-zoning/long-range-planning/city-of-moorhead-comprehensive-plan-onward-moorhead/onward-moorhead-comprehensiv>

Clay County Comprehensive Plan (Currently being updated)

http://www.fmmetrocog.org/application/files/5116/1047/0127/CPWhole_201404161018429873.pdf
(2002 plan)

Clay County is in the process of revising their comprehensive plan which was last updated in 2002. Check out the latest information regarding the plan, including public input opportunities, on the FM Metro COG website at <http://www.fmmetrocog.org/meetings-events/news/clay-county-comprehensive-plan-community-engagement>

Other Planning Documents

In addition to comprehensive plans, local units of government around the country have begun to incorporate food access-related goals and policies into other long-range planning studies. These studies include sustainability plans, recreation plans, corridor studies, sub area analyses, emergency action plans, and other strategic community planning documents.

Fargo-Moorhead Greenway-Recreation Master Plan (2020)

<http://www.fmmetrocog.org/FMGreenway> (click on FM Greenway Master Plan Final Report)
Urban Agriculture/Community Gardens - p. 5.7; Pollinators & Solar – p. 5.4 & 5.19

The FM Greenway-Recreation Master Plan addresses the opportunity to create activities along a 30-mile greenway intended to be used for year-round recreation and economic development. The plan includes a number of food systems related activities including the use of urban agriculture for the purpose of food production and community gardens along the greenway. Vegetation along the entire greenway will support pollinators with two areas adjacent to proposed solar farms having an increased emphasis on pollinator habitat creation.

Community Actions

Local governments can:

- Utilize data sets to identify/map out food deserts and areas within the community where food access issues exist so interventions can be targeted to address the needs of at risk areas within the community.
- Partner with the Cass Clay Food Partners to develop policy that supports a strong local food system.
- Consider funding a Food Systems Coordinator to work with community leaders and residents to identify and address local food system issues.

What can I do?

- Attend Cass Clay Food Commission meetings and First Friday events to stay abreast of local food system related planning activities.
- Participate in public input meetings when comprehensive and other growth plans are being developed to provide input and ideas on how to address local food systems issues.
- Become familiar with your local comprehensive plan and work with community partners, the Cass Clay Food Partners, and city leaders to implement plan recommendations.