

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 18, 2025
To: General Government Committee
From: Dana Bowers, Associate Planner



Addressing Food Insecurity and Access to Food

The City Council approved the development of a Food System Plan as part of the 2024 and the 2025 Long Range Planning Work Programs. Rebeca Potasnik was brought on as a consultant to assist with the development of the Plan. The intent of the Plan is to review the current food landscape in Tumwater and describe key challenges, developments, current collaborations, and opportunities.

The consultant's contract has been extended to December 2025, which was needed to address subject matter experts providing new contacts. To balance input from all parts of the food system, the contractor created matrices to track the subject matter experts and their connections between each part of the food system. Because of the scope of the work and available resources, there was no broad public outreach completed for this study.

Work to review existing plans and literature was also completed as part of the assessment. The recommendations and actions will be considered alongside the project priorities and guiding principles for inclusion in the Food System Plan strategies. A list is provided in the consultant memorandum (Attachment B).

Since August 2024, the consultant has been crafting a key contributor list, balancing input between each of the sectors associated with the food system. The consultant also focused on local contacts while keeping in mind that the food system relies on regional partnerships as well.

Methodology

The City Council directed the work on the Plan to focus on the following priorities:

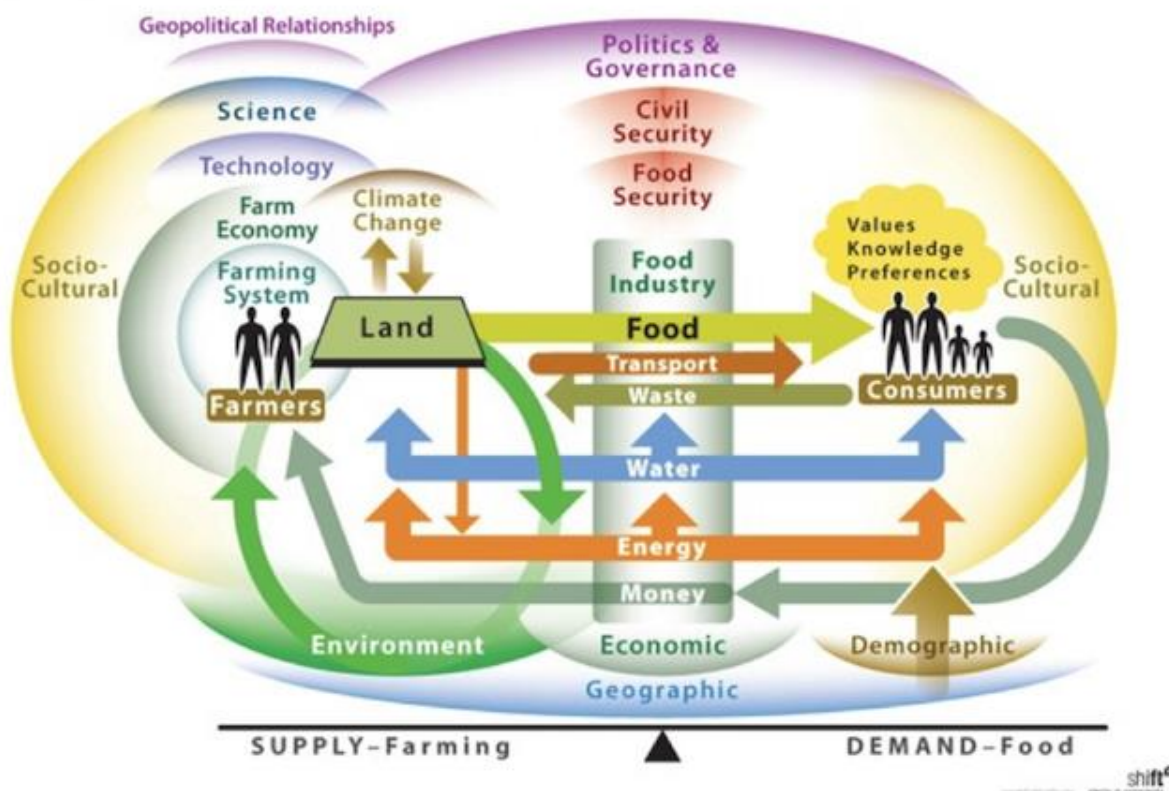
- Providing healthy food for all members of the community;
- Reducing food waste; and
- Supporting local food production and processing

The Plan must follow guiding principles which align with the City of Tumwater Vision and Values, which include:

- **Equity.** A food system should support food security with an emphasis on those community members that experience the greatest inequities.
- **Sustainability.** A balance between environmental health, economic profitability, and social equity creates a resilient food system that meets current food needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- **Stability.** All community members should have reliable access to sufficient, safe, appropriate, and nutritious food, even in the face of unexpected challenges.
- **Resiliency.** The food system should maintain its functionality and continue to provide food security and nutrition under various adverse conditions.
- **Efficacy.** The audience for the plan is the City of Tumwater, therefore, the objectives and actions in this plan will be the areas where this level of government can have the most impact.

The figure below illustrates the complex nature of food systems and how interconnected they can be. Many of the contacts in our local food system represent multiple parts of the system, acting as a producer, a transporter, and participant in governance.

Food System Map – Basic Elements



Any subject matter experts identified by the Planning Commission and City Council were added to the key contributor list. The consultant also noted that broad public engagement is outside the scope of this project. A list of subject matter experts contacted is included in the consultant memorandum (Attachment B).

Interviews with key knowledge leaders were held initially and as additional contacts were added, a survey approach was used to capture more voices and remain on budget for the project. The survey was sent to 57 key contacts, and 25 responses were collected for a response rate of 42%. The survey had 18 questions with 14 long answer style questions. A summary of responses will be included in the Community Food Assessment.

The Warren Family on Hoadly Loop Road SE was also contacted for participation by our consultant. To date, Rebeca has not been able to meet with them for an interview.

Timeline

The term of the project is until December 2025. Since the Comprehensive Plan periodic update is due in December, completing work on the Food Service Plan and incorporating its recommendations into the Comprehensive Plan before adoption would be ideal. The timeline below provides the project schedule, which will conclude work on the plan by July 2025.

Deliverables	Expected Completion
Community Food Assessment	March – April 2025
Food System Plan’s Goals and Objectives	April – May 2025
Food System Plan Strategies	May – June 2025
Food System Plan Complete	June – July 2025

The contractor is scheduled to present at the General Government Committee again on April 15, 2025.