

City of Tumwater

Food System Plan



Power House Ranch produce at Tumwater Farmers Market, photo by Kelly Marie Dawson

Adopted November _____, 2025 by Resolution No. 2025-015



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1. INTRODUCTION

This Food System Plan addresses food insecurity at the local level by focusing on how to do the following three things:

1. Provide healthy food for all members of the community.
2. Reduce food waste.
3. Support local food production and processing.

The plan identifies the most impactful activities for Tumwater in addressing core food insecurity issues, eliminating barriers, addressing gaps in the current system, and offering appropriately scaled solutions implemented at the municipal level through collaborations between the City and community partners.

Methodology & Approach

This plan was developed grounded in the principles of equity, sustainability, stability, resiliency, and efficacy.

- 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, culturally 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 Tumwater, therefore, the objectives and actions in this plan will be the areas where the City can have the most impact.

A Community Food Assessment was conducted to provide an understanding of the current local conditions and identify the most impactful activities for Tumwater in achieving its goals. The assessment examined existing conditions, challenges, and opportunities within Tumwater's food system by engaging with 53 subject matter experts that were interviewed or surveyed. Subject matter experts were chosen to holistically represent Tumwater's current food system including natural, physical/built, political, and social aspects.

Interviews were conducted with guiding questions, allowing conversations to follow different directions depending on the interviewee's perspective. The survey was conducted online. Appendix A contains a complete list of the subject matter experts and Appendix B provides the survey and interview questions.

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The assessment and plan development also included a review of literature spanning municipal and regional planning documents, as well as reports, academic articles, websites, and toolkits related to food systems, land use, and public health. A complete list of materials is provided as Appendix C.

The assessment is organized into seven sector summaries:

1. Land Use & Conservation
2. Processors & Producers
3. Retail & Distribution
4. Waste Reduction & Recovery
5. Access & Security
6. Public Health & Nutrition
7. Education & Workforce

Each sector summary includes Key Challenges, Key Developments, and Current Collaborations & Resources. These seven sectors were selected to provide a comprehensive yet streamlined framework for analyzing the food system. They follow established models from other food system assessments, while being adapted to Tumwater’s local context. This structure captures the full cycle of the food system in a way that is relevant for city action and consistent with best practices.

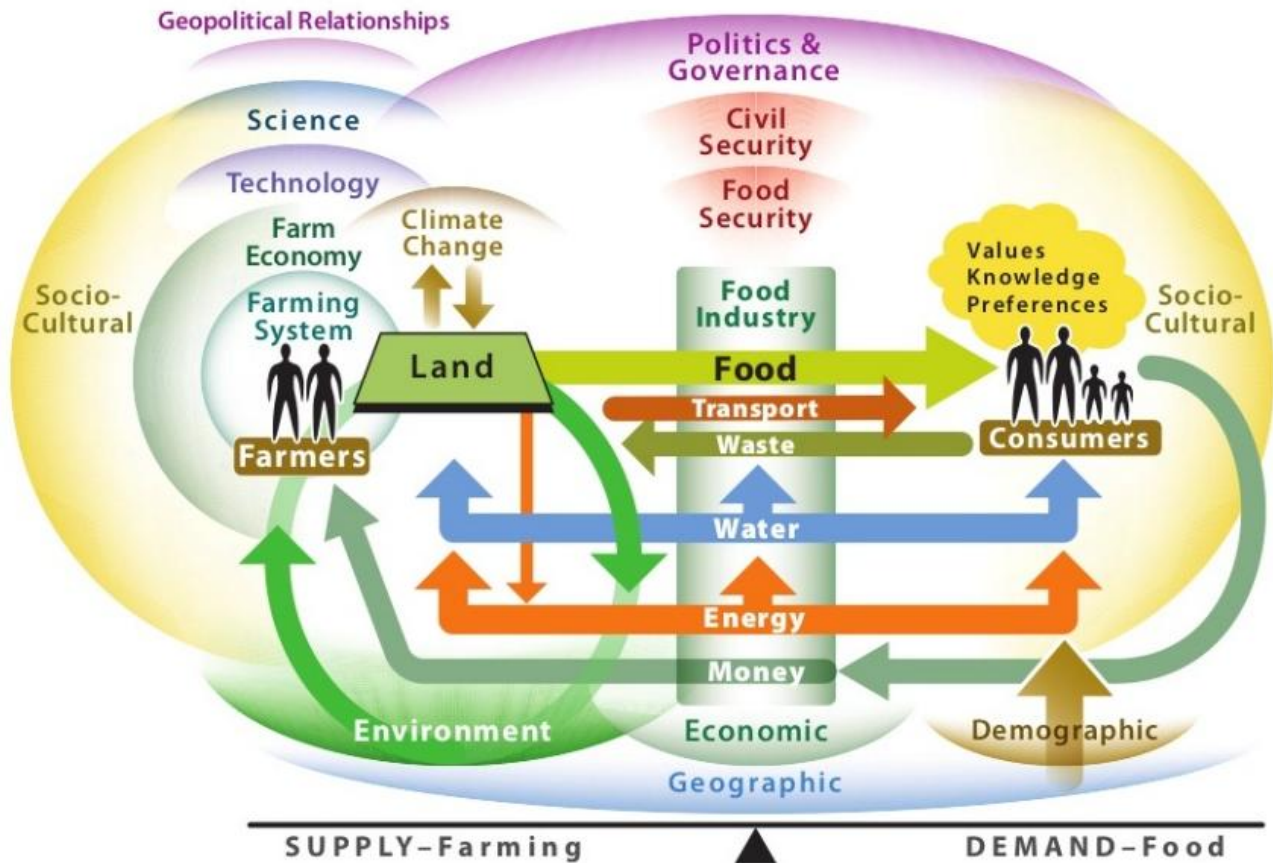
The final section of the plan is organized around Tumwater’s three overarching goals and offers policies and opportunities informed by the Community Food Assessment findings.

What is a Food System?

The food system is an interconnected web of inputs, activities, and actors involved in producing, processing, distributing, consuming, and disposing of food. Figure 1 illustrates the complexity and interrelationships within that system. Importantly, our modern food system does not adhere to jurisdictional boundaries, as food moves across cities, counties, states, and countries before it reaches consumers.

In this context, the definition of “local” becomes both important and nuanced. The term can vary widely depending on the entity using it. For example, Tumwater School District’s Food Services Department uses a definition aligned with the United States Department of Agriculture, the major funder of school meals. In this instance, “local” means food sourced from anywhere within Washington State. By contrast, farmers markets and food hubs often define “local” more narrowly, based on a handful of surrounding counties. These definitions can be visualized as concentric circles expanding outward, shaped by product availability and the proximity of farms, processors, and producers.

Figure 1. The Interrelation of Food System Components.



Source: Future of Food and Farming, UK Government, designed by shiftN

Recognizing the need for a strong and resilient food system, Tumwater has incorporated discussion of the local food system into elements of its 2025 Comprehensive Plan update. The inclusion of a Climate Element—new as of December 2024—demonstrates a commitment to sustainability through greenhouse gas reduction and climate resilience strategies. These are essential for ensuring the long-term health and stability of both local and regional food systems. The Conservation Element will emphasize community collaboration to improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate, and sustainably produced food, ensuring that all community members can reliably access nutritious food.

Recent History of Regional Collaboration

A resilient food system requires regional collaboration. Shared planning, infrastructure, and partnerships help Tumwater and community organizations make a greater impact, especially for those most affected by food insecurity. Over the past 18 years, efforts across Thurston County have brought together diverse partners with goals to build a food system that is equitable, sustainable, stable, and resilient.

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Community Food Summit (2011): In 2007, local nonprofits—including Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB), Thurston County Food Bank, Sustainable South Sound, Left Foot Organics, and the Gleaners Coalition—joined with The Evergreen State College and area farmers to launch the Hunger Free Thurston County Coalition and Food Bank Growers Network. These efforts culminated in the 2011 Community Food Summit, a two-day event that presented findings from a regional food assessment and launched working groups that laid the foundation for future collaboration. Out of this event grew the Thurston Thrives Food Action Team, the Thurston Asset Building Coalition Food Hub, and the Sustainable Thurston Food System Council.

Thurston Asset Building Coalition Food Hub (2012): The Thurston Asset Building Coalition formed a Food Hub to strengthen the local food economy, increase access to healthy food, and promote environmental stewardship. It connected multi-sector partners to support economic stability for low-income households.

Thurston Thrives Food Action Team (2013): Launched by Thurston County Public Health & Social Services, Thurston Thrives used a collective impact model to address public health. The Food Action Team focused on food, nutrition, equity, and health, and developed a Strategy Map presented to the County Board of Health in 2013.

Sustainable Thurston Food System Council (2011–2014): As part of the Sustainable Thurston planning process, the Thurston Regional Planning Council convened a Local Food Systems Panel to inform its regional sustainability plan. Their 2012 White Paper built on recommendations from the Community Food Summit and led to the creation of the Sustainable Thurston Plan in 2014. The Thurston Food System Council emerged from this process as a grassroots body tasked with advancing the plan’s food goals, though it lacked dedicated funding or staffing.

South Sound Food System Network (2016–present): To reduce duplication and align efforts, the Thurston Asset Building Coalition Food Hub, Thurston Thrives Food Action Team, and the Thurston Food System Council merged to form the South Sound Food System Network in 2016. Early leadership included GRuB, Thurston Economic Development Council, Washington Department of Health, and Senior Services for South Sound, with participation from over 30 organizations. South Sound Food System Network is currently staffed through Thurston Asset Building Coalition with state support, though funding is uncertain after June 2025. Recently, the Network has experienced lower participation and a narrower focus on food security rather than broader system goals.

2. SECTOR SUMMARIES

Land Use & Conservation

Tumwater is situated on land traditionally stewarded by Indigenous peoples through active management of oak and camas prairies—among the most biodiverse and culturally significant ecosystems in the Pacific Northwest. These prairies, shaped by generations of human-ecological relationships, support a wide array of food and medicinal plants such as camas, bracken fern rhizomes, hazelnuts, berries, and acorns from Garry oak trees. Seasonal camas harvests are not only vital food-gathering events but also moments of cultural connection. Intentional fire has been used to maintain prairie landscapes and sustain habitats for grazing animals like deer and elk. Today, between two to three percent of these unique ecosystems remain.

Land use decisions directly influence the foundations of a healthy and resilient food system. In Tumwater, land is under increasing pressure from the competing needs of housing, commercial and industrial growth, and environmental conservation. These decisions affect the availability of space for local food production, and the preservation of vital ecological and cultural resources.

Key Developments

- Regenerative agriculture contributes to climate solutions by drawing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and sequestering it in the soil.
- From 2012 to 2022, Thurston County lost 27% of its farmland—shrinking from 76,638 acres to 55,943 acres—and 17% of its farms.
- Walkable urban environments and localized food supply chains enhance resilience by improving equitable access to fresh foods, reducing emissions, and supporting local economies.

Key Challenges

- Housing markets favor single family developments, increasing the value of land with access to utilities in urban growth areas and driving the pressure for development.
- High farmland costs in the region create barriers for new and beginning farmers.
- The Growth Management Act prioritizes dense development in urban areas to protect rural area, which does not always readily accommodate food production in urban zones.
- Tumwater must continually navigate tensions between competing urban land use needs for housing, industrial and commercial development, conservation, and agriculture.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- The **Community Farm Land Trust** preserves farmland through community ownership models, long-term leases, and conservation easements, ensuring long-term affordability and land access for farmers in the South Puget Sound.
- The **Thurston Conservation District** supports landowners with technical assistance and conservation planning that promotes soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat.
- The **Natural Resources Conservation Service** provides financial and technical support through programs like Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Conservation Stewardship Program (EQUIP) helping local landowners implement conservation practices that build climate resilience and support sustainable agriculture.

Processors & Producers

The people and businesses who grow, forage, raise, and process food in and around Tumwater are the foundation of the local food system. The makeup of producers in Tumwater area includes small-scale farmers, ranchers, food processors, urban farmers, foragers, and community gardeners. Their efforts contribute to food access, economic resilience, and environmental sustainability. Despite operating at different scales, many processors and producers face similar challenges and opportunities as they work to feed the community.

In 2010, the Tumwater City Council amended urban agriculture regulations (Ordinance O2010-029), making it easier for residents to raise and sell food within city limits. Chickens, rabbits, bees, are allowed on most lots. Miniature livestock are allowed on residential lots over 5,000 square feet and larger animals are permitted on parcels over two acres within city limits.

Tumwater’s 2019 Economic Development Plan highlighted the importance of expanding the craft food and beverage sector in Goal #5. This goal emphasizes not just brewing and distilling, but also the need to strengthen connections across the supply chain—from growers and processors to markets and manufacturers.

Key Developments

- Tumwater is home to two major developments supporting craft food and beverage production: the **Craft District** on Capitol Boulevard and the **Warehouse District** on Old Highway 99. The Craft District, part of a state-funded Innovation Partnership Zone, includes Heritage Distilling, South Puget Sound Community College’s Craft Brewing and Distilling Program, and retail outlets. The Warehouse District features local businesses like Matchless Brewing, Triceratops Brewing, Spud’s Produce Market, and 8 Arms Bakery.
- The **Southwest Washington Regional Agricultural Business & Innovation Park** in Tenino is beginning to open its first phase. Focused on value-added agriculture, the Ag Park supports food-related manufacturing, processing, storage, and packaging. Project partners include the Thurston

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Economic Development Council, City of Tenino, and Dragonwheel Investment Group with support from Washington State University Extension, Port of Olympia, Northwest Agricultural Business Center, and Thurston County.

- **Colvin Ranch** is establishing a USDA-certified meat processing facility at the Ag Park, addressing a longstanding bottleneck for local livestock producers. Once operational, the facility will serve regional ranchers with a planned capacity of up to 100 animals per week, enhancing the regional meat supply chain, improving local food access, and reducing the environmental impact associated with long-distance animal transport.
- The Tumwater School District operated a small farm at Tumwater’s Isabella Bush Park through a program for high school students called **FRESH (Farm Rooted Education for Sustainability & Health)**. Tumwater provides the farmland, a barn, and water at no cost to the school district. Since 2020, FRESH has produced over 13,000 pounds of food for seniors, low-income students’ families, and the Thurston County Food Bank. As of this writing, the program is scheduled to end in July 2025 due to the school district’s budget cuts.

Key Challenges

- High farmland costs limit access for new and beginning farmers.
- Access to affordable water remains a significant barrier for urban farms and gardens.
- Tariffs may increase the cost or reduce availability of critical farming inputs.
- Agricultural employers report difficulty hiring and retaining workers.
- Small-scale farmers often lack access to subsidies, which are typically tied to acreage or production volume, and time-intensive application processes often outweigh the benefit.
- Many processors and producers lack access to affordable cold storage, which limits the ability to scale or diversify their operations.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- Tumwater currently has one **community garden** with 20 plots, located at Tumwater United Methodist Church. The **Parks and Recreation Department** has a grant program to provide funding to support the expansion of community gardens in Tumwater.
- **Northwest Agriculture Business Center** provides technical assistance to agricultural businesses, including farms and food businesses in Thurston County.
- **Native Grown & Gathered** offers marketing and technical support to Native American food producers and businesses.
- **Our Community Kitchen** and **LOC-OLY Grown**, two commercial kitchens on Olympia’s west side, support small-scale food entrepreneurs with prep stations, equipment, and cold/dry storage. Our Community Kitchen also offers group purchasing opportunities.

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- Access to farmland and farmland loss are high-priority issues for Thurston Conservation District, which has worked county-wide since 2014 with the **South Sound FarmLink** program and since 2023, in Olympia with the **Farm My Yard** program. Innovative urban agriculture options similar to Farm My Yard may serve Tumwater’s needs for increased urban food production.
- In addition to technical assistance for landowners, the **Thurston Conservation District** offers community garden support to governments, public agencies, organizations, and individuals through the **Community Garden Support Network**.

Retail & Distribution

Retail and distribution are essential for strengthening Tumwater’s local food economy and improving access to fresh, locally produced food. The City’s focus on cultivating a strong craft food and beverage sector aligns with broader economic and land use goals. Tumwater’s 2019 Economic Development Plan includes fostering community-oriented retail, especially grocery-anchored centers (Goal #8), and supporting the full craft food and beverage supply chain (Goal #5), from growers to markets.

Key Developments

- Food hubs connect small and mid-sized producers with institutional and retail buyers by aggregating, distributing, and marketing local products. These services help farms access stable markets, like schools, grocery stores, and food banks, while streamlining local sourcing for buyers. The region now has two food hubs: Southwest Washington Food Hub and South Sound Fresh.
- The Warehouse and Craft Districts provide retail and distribution space for local food and beverage producers.

Key Challenges

- Food costs have increased, and fresh local food is harder to access.
- The Tumwater Farmers Market is under-resourced, with limited operation and an outdated web presence.
- Federal programs like Farm to School face funding uncertainties.
- Cold storage capacity remains limited across the distribution network.
- Direct-to-consumer retailers, such as farmers markets, food hubs, and farms, face barriers to accepting electronic benefit transfer (EBT), including administrative burdens and technology costs.

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Current Collaborations & Resources

- The **Tumwater Farmers Market** operates June–September 2nd and 4th Sundays, at Peter G. Schmidt Elementary School (11 AM–3 PM).
- The **Community Farm Land Trust** publishes the *Fresh from the Farm Guide*, a free printed and electronic regional farm map and directory connecting consumers with farms, community supported agriculture (CSAs), markets, and food banks in a four-county region.
- **Farm to School**, a federal program implemented by the Washington State Department of Agriculture and regional partners, supports local food sourcing and garden-based learning. Tumwater School District does not currently participate.
- **Harbor Wholesale**, located in Lacey, is the largest independent food distributor on the West Coast. While not solely focused on local producers, its extensive warehousing, cold storage, and logistics infrastructure plays a key role in regional food distribution and could offer opportunities for partnership or logistical support to local processors and suppliers.
- **South Sound Fresh** serves Thurston and Mason Counties from its Olympia location. It works with over 50 producers and offers an online marketplace for consumers.
- The **Southwest Washington Food Hub**, a program of the Southwest Washington Growers Co-op, supports more than 30 producers in a six-county region.

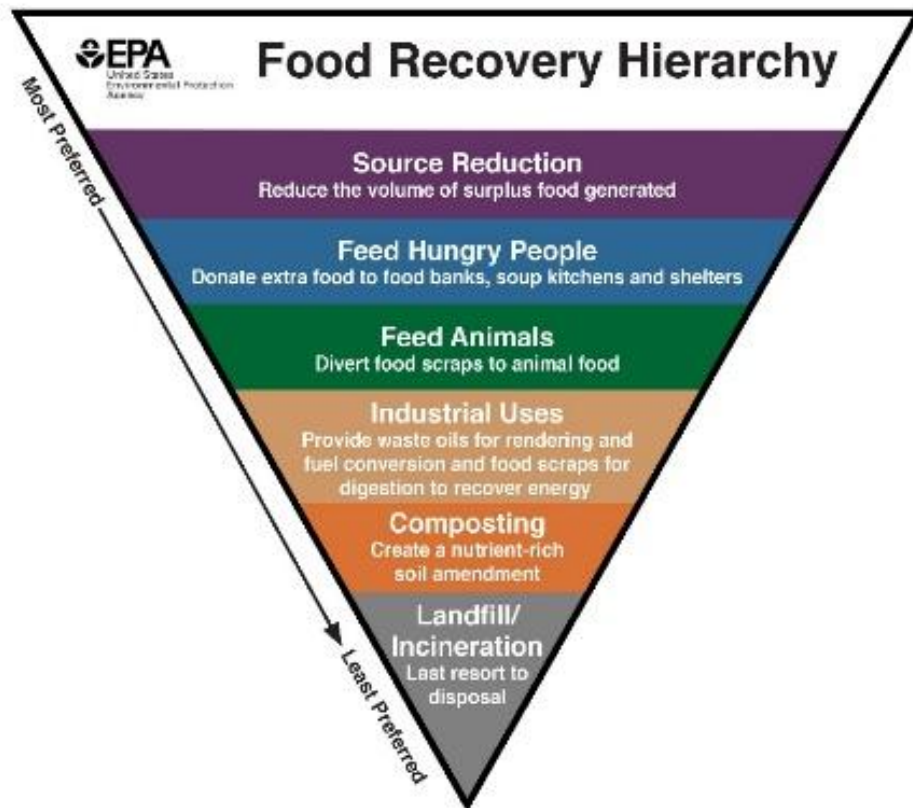
Waste Reduction & Recovery

Reducing food waste offers numerous benefits.

1. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction. Diverting food from landfills reduces methane production.
2. Resource Conservation. Preventing food waste conserves the water, energy, and labor used in production.
3. Economic Savings. Households and businesses reduce costs associated with food production, transport, and disposal.
4. Improved Food Security. Surplus food can be redirected to those in need.
5. Soil Health. Composting food waste reduces landfill reliance and enriches soil through nutrient recycling.

The food recovery hierarchy prioritizes waste reduction strategies with landfill as the last resort.

Figure 2: Food Recovery Hierarchy



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency

Key Developments

- Washington’s Organics Management Law (2022) mandates phased-in organic waste separation for businesses as part of the state’s climate strategy:
 - 2024: Applies to businesses generating 8+ yards/week of food or yard waste
 - 2025: Threshold lowers to 4+ yards/week
 - 2026: Applies to businesses generating 96+ gallons/week

Key Challenges

- Enforcement of the Organics Management Law relies on self-reporting, with no immediate penalties for non-compliance.
- Leadership changes have slowed regional coordination on food waste diversion and rescue initiatives.
- Inadequate cold storage capacity limits food rescue operations.
- Edible food is often discarded due to cost or logistical barriers when supply chains fail.

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- Packaging contamination prevents some food waste from being composted.
- Short meal periods in K–12 schools lead to uneaten food and higher waste.
- Food diversion in schools often depends on individual staff initiatives rather than system-wide practices.
- Most Tumwater schools rely on reheating and serving pre-prepared meals which produce more packaging waste than scratch cooking.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- **LeMay Pacific Disposal** is Tumwater’s primary hauler, partnering with **Brady Trucking** and **Silver Springs Organics** for composting.
- The **Solid Waste Advisory Committee**, which includes a Tumwater representative from the City Council, advises Thurston County’s five-year Solid Waste Management Plan.
- **Thurston Conservation District** offers technical support for composting and other food waste reduction education.
- The **Thurston County Food Bank** rescues surplus food from retailers and restaurants and operates a gleaning program to harvest excess crops from local farms.
- The **Use Food Well Washington Plan**, created under state law (RCW 70A.205.715), outlines 30 recommendations to reduce food waste and its impacts.
- The **Washington Center for Sustainable Food Management**, launched in 2024, supports statewide food waste diversion and coordinates efforts under the Use Food Well plan.

Access & Security

Food security means reliable, consistent access to enough nutritious, culturally appropriate food to lead healthy, active lives without relying on emergency food or coping strategies like skipping meals or scavenging. *Food insecurity* arises when that access is limited due to insufficient resources, availability, or social barriers.

The latest Washington State Food Security Survey conducted August to October 2024 shows that food insecurity remains high among low-income households and those relying on food assistance. Groceries and housing were the most frequently cited financial hardships, with protein-rich and perishable foods such as meat, eggs, and fresh produce being the hardest to afford. The expiration of pandemic-era support programs, combined with rising food costs, has worsened financial strain.

In 2023, 14 percent of Tumwater residents received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. This federal program delivered through Electronic Benefit Transfer cards provides about \$187 per month per person in 2025, approximately \$6.16 per day. Benefits are based on the assumption that households spend 30 percent of their net income on food, and the program fills the gap between that

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amount and the United States Department of Agriculture’s low-cost Thrifty Food Plan. While the federal government covers benefit costs, states share administrative costs.

Washington State’s Market Match program offers additional incentives for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program, and Senior Nutrition participants when they buy fresh produce at participating markets and stores.

The Thurston County Food Bank does not have a walk-in location in Tumwater, but its main warehouse is in Tumwater near the Interstate 5 and State Route 101 interchange. Thurston County Food Bank operates five satellite pantries in Tumwater. Some satellites use a shopping model where patrons choose their grocery items, and some use a drive-through model where patrons receive a pre-packaged assortment of groceries.

- South Puget Sound Community College (shopping model)
- Mt. View Church (drive-through)
- North Star Church of God (shopping)
- Tumwater United Methodist Church (drive-through)
- Tumwater Senior Center (shopping)

Clients receive 25–35 pounds of food per visit including shelf-stable items, protein, dairy, deli, and produce. Thurston County Food Bank also offers mobile programs like United States Department of Agriculture-funded senior boxes, home delivery, food rescue, local purchasing, and gleaning.

Figure 3. Food Sources by Value and Weight.



Source: Thurston County Food Bank.

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Key Developments

- SNAP's benefit formula assumes 30% of net income goes toward food, but high housing and living costs often reduce actual food spending.
- Thurston County Food Bank 's demand is growing faster than the local population.
- Mutual aid models, like Little Free Pantries, expanded during the pandemic and continued to operate.
- Shifting federal policy priorities have introduced uncertainty around future food security funding.

Key Challenges

- Rising food prices strain household budgets and food access.
- Awareness of available resources and programs is low.
- Culturally appropriate food options are limited.
- Donations from large food companies may include highly processed or near-expired items, which do not always meet nutritional or cultural needs.
- Regional food assistance efforts lack coordination.
- Thurston County Food Bank patrons in Tumwater report needing more staples like milk, eggs, and fresh produce.
- Limited hours, days, and locations of assistance programs can be barriers.
- Many small farms and markets face administrative and technical barriers to accepting Electronic Benefit Transfer, limiting access for individuals who rely exclusively on federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- The **Old Town Center** provides weekday lunches for seniors at no cost or suggested donation, now prepared by **Senior Services of South Sound**. Participation increased following a federal grant. The center also hosts a monthly Thurston County Food Bank food distribution serving 30–40 seniors, with demand rising post-pandemic.
- The **Tumwater Senior Council** provides a monthly lunch at Tumwater Historical Park from March through October each year.
- The **Food Source Foundation** supports mutual aid efforts in Tumwater, including **Souper Sunday – Tumwater**, a community-based food sharing initiative launched via Facebook in April 2025.
- **Senior Services for South Sound** operates the federally funded Senior Nutrition Program. The program serves 2,500 clients annually with hot and frozen meals, including 400 **Meals on Wheels**

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participants. Meals are tailored to health needs and prioritize local sourcing. Tumwater is a program partner.

- The **Olympia Kiwanis Club** runs three gardens producing over 20,000 pounds of donated food annually for Thurston County Food Bank.
- **Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB)** installs free backyard gardens for low-income households and offers continued support via workshops, a seed library, and peer learning.
- **Little Free Pantries**, modeled on book-sharing libraries via a community cupboard, offer self-serve access to food and personal care items in several Tumwater locations, including Mountain View Church, Western Plaza Mobile Home Park, and an expanded version on Hoadly Loop that incorporates a pop-up tent.
- **Centro Integral Educativo Latino de Olympia (CIELO)** hosts monthly food distributions in high demand—often running out of food within an hour—underscoring ongoing unmet community needs.
- **Catholic Community Services** operates **The Community Kitchen** in downtown Olympia, serving lunch and dinner meals Monday through Saturday throughout the year.
- The **Union Gospel Mission** in downtown Olympia offers three meals daily Monday through Friday, one meal on Saturday, and two meals on Sunday year-round.

Public Health & Nutrition

Nutrition is a key component of preventive public health and contributes to healthier communities. Unfortunately, many people have limited knowledge about nutrition, cooking skills, seasonal eating, accessing or preparing fresh foods, and incentive and assistance programs. Lack of adequate food can affect physical and mental health. Children who grow up in homes without enough food are at an increased risk of illness and experiencing academic and psychosocial problems. Nutritional deficiencies and family stress both contribute to these outcomes.

The Tumwater School District serves approximately 3,800 lunches and 1,500 breakfasts each school day. During the summer months, it continues to provide meals, serving around 250 students daily at designated school sites. In the 2023–2024 school year, the district received \$177 per student in combined federal and state meal funding, with 97% of that funding coming from federal sources. For the 2025–2026 fiscal year, 33.24% of students are eligible for the Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Program, an increase of 3.5% from the previous year.

Key Developments

- The Tumwater School District has experienced a 30% rise in food costs over four years. Federal reimbursements have not kept pace, and the state’s contribution varies based on the share of students eligible for subsidized meals. The district must cover any shortfalls.

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- In the past 15–20 years, school kitchens have been redesigned with smaller spaces and limited equipment, shifting meal service away from scratch cooking. Today, most Tumwater schools rely on reheating and serving pre-prepared meals due to infrastructure and staffing constraints.

Key Challenges

- The Tumwater School District lacks a central kitchen; each school handles its own food preparation and storage. Infrastructure limitations in individual school kitchens constrain their ability to incorporate fresh, locally sourced foods.
- Meal programs often struggle to integrate donated or rescued food while meeting nutrition standards.
- Rising food prices make it harder for people with low incomes to afford fresh, nutrient-dense, local foods.
- Language barriers limit access to nutritional information, food sources, and program details.
- Many processed foods contain increasingly high levels of sugar and sodium, which can negatively impact health and condition people's taste preferences to crave more salt and sugar in their diets.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- **SNAP-Ed**, the educational arm of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), provides nutrition education and budgeting tools through partners like the Thurston County Food Bank and WSU Extension.
- **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program** supports pregnant and postpartum parents and young children with nutrition education, healthy foods, breastfeeding support, and referrals. The program is managed by the Washington State Department of Health and receives federal funding.
- Community organizations like **GRuB** and the **Olympia Food Co-op** offer free and low-cost classes and workshops on nutrition, cooking, gardening, foraging, and preparing wild foods and medicines.

Education & Workforce

Education and workforce development are essential to building a resilient and inclusive local food system. Tumwater's 2019 Economic Development Plan prioritizes growing the craft food and beverage sector by developing a Center of Excellence in partnership with local education providers. This initiative supports producers, manufacturers, and markets while creating training and career pathways. The Plan also encourages recruiting educational institutions to strengthen Tumwater's economic base and

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community vitality. Together, these goals lay the groundwork for food system education that supports local business, community health, and economic opportunity.

Key Developments

- K–12 education can proactively support food security and food literacy. School gardens and greenhouses at local schools in Tumwater teach environmental stewardship, food origins, and seasonal eating. These programs help reduce food waste and foster appreciation for the local food economy.
- Teaching cooking and food preservation builds self-sufficiency and improves access to nutritious, affordable food.
- Workplace wellness programs, like those offered through the Southwest Washington Food Hub of which Tumwater has participated, connect workplaces to fresh, locally grown foods and family farms to improve employee health and wellbeing and support the regional food system.

Key Challenges

- School gardens often lack stable funding and rely on volunteers, including non-staff community members.
- Youth lack exposure to local, seasonal foods in school cafeterias. The Tumwater School District’s lack of a central kitchen limits scratch cooking, food preparation flexibility, and the ability to process and store local ingredients, contributing to reliance on heat-and-serve meals and restricting nutrition quality. These challenges are compounded by a federal reimbursement rate that has not kept pace with rising food costs.
- Regional farm employers face persistent labor shortages caused by seasonal work, low wages, and a lack of qualified or interested applicants.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- **Pacific Mountain Region Agriculture Workforce Development Asset Inventory** is a living document maintained by Washington State University (WSU) Thurston County Extension, detailing resources for agricultural workforce development—spanning training, capital, infrastructure, and education from K–12 to nonprofit providers.
- **QUEST (Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy & Training)** a regional partnership led by Thurston Economic Development Council, WSU Extension, GRuB, and others—created a report in 2024 focused on strengthening the agricultural workforce through business engagement, community outreach, and employment training. The partnership is no longer active, although follow-up from the report is still in process.
- **South Puget Sound Community College** is an award-winning, top community college which offers food, beverage arts, and hospitality programs in culinary arts, baking and pastry, and craft brewing/distilling.

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- The **Evergreen State College's Organic Farm** operates as a learning laboratory for their agriculture program.
- **New Market Skills Center**, located in Tumwater, provides high school technical training across 12 districts, including a Culinary Arts Program with an operating deli.
- **ASHHO Cultural Community Center**, located in Tumwater, hosts a paid, 12-week culinary and hospitality job training program.
- **FRESH (Farm Rooted Education for Sustainability & Health)** is a GRuB-inspired, hands-on program that operates a small farm at the Tumwater's Isabella Bush Park for Tumwater High School students, especially those facing adversity. Tumwater provides the farmland, barn, and water at no cost. Students earn credit and gain job skills through farm and classroom work. Since 2020, FRESH has produced over 13,000 pounds of food for seniors, low-income students' families, and the Thurston County Food Bank. As of this writing, the program is scheduled to end in July 2025 due to Tumwater School District budget cuts.
- **Enterprise for Equity, Thurston Economic Development Council, and the Thurston Chamber of Commerce** offer business development resources for aspiring and existing food system entrepreneurs.
- **Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB)** is a non-profit with a small urban farm located on Olympia's west side, serving all of Thurston County and beyond. They work at the intersection of food, education, and health systems. GRuB provides career pathways and education in agriculture and wild foods and medicines for youth, veterans, educators, people with low incomes, and Black and Indigenous communities.

3. FOOD SYSTEM GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES

This section presents the heart of the Tumwater Food System Plan: a set of goals, policies, and actionable opportunities designed to strengthen Tumwater’s food system in alignment with community values and identified needs. Informed by input from subject matter experts, review of relevant plans and policies, and best practices from across the region, these recommendations are grounded in the realities of what Tumwater can influence, lead, or support. While the preceding Community Food Assessment outlines the current conditions and key challenges, this section offers a path forward to be accomplished over the next 20 years in parallel with the Comprehensive Plan.

Each goal is supported by a set of policies that reflect Tumwater’s potential roles. Under each policy, a series of opportunities is identified. These are not mandates, but potential actions Tumwater could consider over time, depending on available resources, partnerships, and evolving community needs.

The structure of this section is intended to support flexible implementation. Some opportunities may be short-term and low-cost, while others may require longer timelines, inter-agency collaboration, or new funding mechanisms. Together, they offer a community-shaped framework to guide the Tumwater’s future planning, investment, and decision-making related to creating a food system grounded in the principles of equity, sustainability, stability, resiliency, and efficacy.

Goal 1: Provide access to fresh, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all members of the community.

Access to nutritious, culturally appropriate food is a foundational element of a resilient, healthy community. In Tumwater, food access is shaped by factors such as household income, proximity to stores or markets, housing stability, access to transportation, and awareness of information and available services. Goal 1 identifies opportunities to reduce barriers to food access and strengthen food assistance and networks. Tumwater’s role in this work focuses on coordination, communication, and supportive policy to ensure that everyone, particularly the most vulnerable residents, can reliably access healthy food, and that all Tumwater neighborhoods are included in future improvements to the local food environment.

Policies and Opportunities

- 1.1 Expand access to healthy, culturally relevant, and affordable food from both local and non-local sources across all neighborhoods.**
 - 1.1.1 Partner with the Thurston County Food Bank to establish a satellite brick-and-mortar food bank in Tumwater near the new Tumwater Community Center.
 - 1.1.2 Work with regional partners to make free and subsidized community garden plots available citywide and prioritize funding for low-income households.
 - 1.1.3 Support farmers to become certified to accept EBT/SNAP benefits from customers.

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- 1.1.4 Work with interest groups to identify and address barriers to consistent scheduling to support increased weekly operations of the Tumwater Farmers Market during its core season and explore off-season openings.
- 1.1.5 Use Tumwater’s communication channels to increase access to and visibility of food assistance programs (e.g., food banks/pantries, SNAP, Market Match, SUN Bucks) and to promote food bank satellite locations and donations.
- 1.1.6 Continue to support food access through senior meal programs, city-sponsored events, and youth programs where allowable, and prioritize the inclusion of fresh, seasonal, and culturally relevant local foods, particularly in services benefiting low-income or vulnerable populations.

1.2 Enhance public education and outreach related to the local food system.

- 1.2.1 Integrate food, gardening, and nutrition learning opportunities into city sponsored programming with incentives to participate, such as classes offered through the Department of Parks and Recreation and at community events.
- 1.2.2 Promote partner led, community-based initiatives such as cooking classes, gardening workshops, and nutrition education tailored to underserved populations.
- 1.2.3 Continue to support funding for Tumwater school garden maintenance and education.

1.3 Increase opportunities for individual and community self-reliance.

- 1.3.1 Engage with Thurston Conservation District to support community garden expansion, GIS studies for urban agriculture land identification, soil testing, and code review.
- 1.3.2 Expand partnerships for edible landscaping and urban fruit and nut tree planting in public spaces including parks and along pedestrian corridors with scheduled community care and harvest days.
- 1.3.3 Build relationships with homeowner associations to better understand their needs and to provide support and remove barriers that would allow home food gardens and climate-resilient landscaping which conserves water for food production.

1.4 Ensure supportive infrastructure, zoning, and land use policies.

- 1.4.1 Encourage walkable and bikeable neighborhoods with access to fresh food outlets, including farmers markets and grocery stores to reduce food deserts.
- 1.4.2 Support siting the Tumwater Farmers Market near a community gathering area.
- 1.4.3 Explore including food access as a design consideration for new developments including access to food retailers and spaces for urban agriculture/community gardens.
- 1.4.4 Explore opportunities to allow different types of food distribution sites (e.g., food share hubs, mutual aid stands, gleaning events) in appropriate areas of the city through clear

guidelines and permitting processes that balance flexibility with neighborhood and safety considerations.

- 1.4.5 Develop and maintain a GIS map of free food pantries, neighborhood-based food distribution sites, food bank satellites, and other free food distribution sites to support coordination, identify service gaps, and improve visibility for those seeking food assistance.

1.5 Strengthen regional food system collaboration.

- 1.5.1 Advocate for regional funding and coordinate cross-jurisdictional planning, investments, and grant applications for shared infrastructure.
- 1.5.2 Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by collaborating with Thurston County Emergency Management to integrate food security into disaster preparedness plans including identification of nearest non-impacted supply chains and ensuring food storage, recovery, and redistribution plans are part of emergency response frameworks.
- 1.5.3 Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by developing and coordinating policies and staffing models for rapid response food systems during future crises, including sourcing, safety, and volunteer mobilization.
- 1.5.4 Support existing pop-up food distribution efforts as part of community emergency response capacity.
- 1.5.5 Assess cold storage needs and explore opportunities to expand infrastructure such as shared-use refrigeration at community centers, food hubs, or partner facilities—while supporting efforts to increase capacity and ensure reliable access during emergencies.
- 1.5.6 Map existing food production, storage, and distribution resources within Tumwater to support internal planning and emergency response coordination.
- 1.5.7 Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by supporting increased financial resources for community-led organizations working to enhance food security in Tumwater and the surrounding region.

Goal 2: Reduce food waste.

In 2021, the Washington State Department of Ecology released the Use Food Well Washington Plan, a statewide strategy identifying 30 prioritized actions to prevent food waste, rescue surplus food, and recycle food scraps. Tumwater’s Food System Plan draws inspiration from this framework and aligns with many of its core objectives, particularly those that local subject matter experts brought forward that mirrored these state level goals and are relevant to local government roles. This alignment

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positions Tumwater to engage with regional and state partners in coordinated food waste reduction efforts and may strengthen future opportunities for collaborative funding or pilot programs.

Policies and Opportunities

2.1 Prevent food waste at all stages of the food system.

- 2.1.1 Support local schools to reduce food waste by providing a minimum of 20 minutes of seated lunch time, which improves nutrition and reduces plate waste.
- 2.1.2 Partner with Thurston County Public Works and food assistance organizations to reduce edible food waste at transfer stations by creating clear donation guidance and outreach for truckers and other supply chain actors, addressing common barriers like time pressure, lack of information, and logistical challenges.
- 2.1.3 Collaborate with regional partners to develop and distribute customized educational materials and mailers to residents and businesses focused on source reduction.
- 2.1.4 Promote food waste reduction among local businesses through campaigns that highlight cost savings, environmental benefits, and compliance with Washington’s commercial organics recycling requirements—while encouraging participation from businesses of all sizes, including those not subject to the mandate.

2.2 Partner with Thurston County to increase community-wide food waste education and engagement.

- 2.2.1 Participate in and promote Food Waste Prevention Week and related events at the Tumwater and regional level.
- 2.2.2 Offer community compost giveaways and food waste education events through the Department of Parks and Recreation and other community programs.
- 2.2.3 Create and promote engaging social media campaigns and signage to inform the public about food waste prevention best practices and available composting programs.
- 2.2.4 Include food waste prevention as a component of relevant grant funding criteria such as neighborhood matching grants.
- 2.2.5 Offer workshops on food storage, preservation, and meal planning to help individuals and businesses reduce food waste.

2.3 Expand food recovery and redistribution systems.

- 2.3.1 Ensure composting systems are used at all Tumwater public facilities and programs.
- 2.3.2 Partner with Thurston County Public Works to educate businesses and residents on proper composting practices to reduce contamination and increase participation.

- 2.3.3 Reinvigorate regional food rescue initiatives by identifying historic and resident-led models and new opportunities.
- 2.3.4 Support the creation of a regional, centralized database or platform to connect food waste producers with organizations that can redistribute food to those in need.

Goal 3: Support local food processing and production.

Local food producers and processors are critical to building a sustainable, resilient regional food system. Supporting this sector strengthens food security, drives local economic development, reduces reliance on long supply chains, and supports climate adaptation. However, small-scale producers and processors face barriers such as limited land access, zoning and permitting challenges, infrastructure gaps, and unstable market access. This goal identifies solutions where Tumwater has influence to help create the conditions that allow local food enterprises to thrive and enhance the economic viability of the local food system.

Policies and Opportunities

3.1 Reduce barriers and provide incentives for local growers and processors.

- 3.1.1 Collaborate with local, regional, and state partners, such as those involved in the Craft and Warehouse districts, to support and promote opportunities for local producers to access and expand markets.
- 3.1.2 Explore partnerships to improve access to land, water, and infrastructure for food producers by supporting shared-use models, facilitating connections to underutilized land, and leveraging programs such as land leases and technical assistance.
- 3.1.3 Review existing land use regulations to identify barriers that disproportionately limit food production opportunities for low-income households and those on smaller lots.
- 3.1.4 Support water access and explore potential rate reductions for urban agriculture, community gardens, and school gardens such as stormwater fee waivers, fire hydrant access, and subsidized or waived system development charges—recognizing their role in strengthening food security, fostering education and community resilience, supporting local economies, and contributing to emergency preparedness.
- 3.1.5 Facilitate networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities among local growers, processors, and market operators to strengthen community connections and business viability.
- 3.1.6 Explore ways to support local direct-to-consumer programs, such as bakery shares (subscription-based access to baked goods) and produce pickup sites, to diversify market options for producers and consumers.

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- 3.1.7 Develop a comprehensive toolkit for aspiring and current local food producers, including farmstands, community gardens, p-patches, and backyard poultry—detailing permit requirements, best practices, available resources, and contacts for technical assistance.
- 3.1.8 Explore opportunities to connect culinary entrepreneurship and food system innovation with arts and cultural events and technology funding streams, including vertical farming and agritourism.
- 3.2 Support access to land for local food production by historically underserved and aspiring farmers, and coordinate with partners to conserve agriculturally viable lands in appropriate areas.**
 - 3.2.1 Partner with the Community Farm Land Trust and Thurston County to explore mechanisms such as urban growth area swaps and farmland easements for conserving high-value agricultural land adjacent to Tumwater’s Urban Growth Area, while supporting farmland transitions to new farmers.
 - 3.2.2 Promote and expand access to food production on suitable underutilized private and public or quasi-public lands within city limits by supporting programs such as those offered by community-based organizations, where feasible, and consistent with land use and environmental constraints.
 - 3.2.3 Consider reviewing and amending development regulations to allow small-scale farm stands, including in residential neighborhoods, to support local growers and increase access to fresh food.
 - 3.2.4 Map locations where city-owned or managed resources (e.g., land, water access, infrastructure) are currently used for food production. Use this data to inform land use planning, resource allocation, and future urban agriculture initiatives.
- 3.3 Strengthen local food system infrastructure.**
 - 3.3.1 Support regional partnerships to develop shared-use food infrastructure, such as processing, cold storage, and commercial kitchen facilities, by leveraging city assets and pursuing state, federal, and philanthropic funding opportunities. Evaluate the feasibility of repurposing existing sites in Tumwater, including underutilized or public facilities, where appropriate.
 - 3.3.2 Explore strategic investments and partnerships with food hubs to expand regional aggregation and distribution capacity that supports small- and mid-scale producers and improves food access.
- 3.4 Promote local food purchasing and community engagement.**
 - 3.4.1 Educate and engage the community on the value of local food by coordinating public education efforts highlighting the health, environmental, and economic benefits of

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local food systems, including the role of regenerative agriculture in climate resilience and carbon sequestration.

- 3.4.2 Educate and engage the community on the value of local food by celebrating local food and producers through storytelling, city-sponsored events, informational signage, and communications platforms—focusing on systems and practices rather than promoting specific businesses.
- 3.4.3 Raise awareness of the broader impacts of food choices by educating residents about the social, environmental, and economic costs of industrial food systems and the value of local purchasing. Strategies may include community events such as a local food or film festival, themed messaging on city social media and newsletters, and interactive booths at public gatherings like the Tumwater Farmers Market or Arbor Day celebrations, for example.
- 3.4.4 Strengthen local markets and values-aligned public purchasing by identifying existing barriers and exploring mechanisms and partnerships to support the Tumwater Farmers Market’s scale and sustainability, such as operational funding, expanded schedules, improved signage, and vendor subsidies.
- 3.4.5 Strengthen local markets through support of local food hubs by educating and engaging the community with the model and providing distribution sites on city-owned property.
- 3.4.6 Consider local policy options, such as permit fee reductions, for food producers operating at small scale or using conservation practices.
- 3.4.7 Assess opportunities to align City purchasing practices where applicable with values-based criteria such as local sourcing, environmental sustainability, and equity. Where Tumwater’s procurement is limited, promote public awareness of these values through communications and support similar efforts by partner agencies, when feasible.
- 3.4.8 Encourage farm-to-table connections by collaborating with regional food system partners to support initiatives that help local restaurants, bakeries, caterers, and butchers to access regional ingredients. This may include promotional campaigns, networking events, or technical assistance.

3.5 Increase local food production capacity.

- 3.5.1 Foster workforce development and support new farmers by continuing to support educational activities through the Tumwater School District, including the Tumwater FRESH Program at Isabella Bush Park, alongside partnerships with New Market Skills Center and South Puget Sound Community College to build a skilled food and agriculture workforce.

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- 3.5.2 Explore partnerships to foster workforce development and encourage new farmers by supporting Thurston Conservation District’s FarmLink and Farm My Yard programs and creating pathways for new farmers to access land, training, and technical support.
- 3.5.3 Foster workforce development and support new farmers by supporting community-based organizations and existing commercial kitchens, such as Enterprise for Equity, ASHHO, and Our Community Kitchen, to offer business incubation and mentorship opportunities for beginning food processors and producers.
- 3.5.4 Promote the economic viability of small-scale farming by supporting efforts to make small-scale and urban farming financially sustainable by exploring ways to reduce regulatory barriers, promoting cooperative models, connecting growers with local markets and procurement opportunities, and exploring access to business support services, microgrants, and relevant state or federal funding.
- 3.5.5 Promote the economic viability of small-scale farming by encouraging creative models such as agritourism, culinary arts partnerships, and vertical farming that align with local zoning and community values.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINUED WORK

Tumwater’s decision to develop a Food System Plan reflects growing awareness of the importance of local food systems to public health, economic resilience, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. This Plan provides a strong starting point for advancing these goals.

However, the scope of this work was necessarily constrained by a modest budget and a limited timeline. The methodology was intentionally designed to align with these parameters, including a targeted number of subject matter expert interviews and a streamlined review of existing planning documents and research. More expansive engagement, particularly with additional food system stakeholders and communities most impacted by food insecurity, would provide valuable insights that were beyond the current project's scope.

The community needs assessment offers a non-exhaustive inventory of existing conditions, programs, and partnerships. Given the rapidly shifting political landscape at the federal level and constrained state and federal budgets, policies impacting local food systems are in active flux. As such, some elements of this assessment may become outdated quickly, and opportunities identified in this Plan may require adjustment as conditions continue to evolve.

Similarly, the Goals, Policies, and Opportunities outlined in this Plan reflect what could be developed and vetted within the available resources. A more comprehensive set of opportunities could be proposed with additional time, staffing, and sustained community input. Many other jurisdictions that have engaged in food system planning have done so over the course of multiple years and often benefit from the involvement of standing bodies such as regional food policy councils or interdepartmental task forces.

The scope of this planning effort also called for the inclusion of key performance indicators and a method for maintaining and updating resource materials. While some suggested metrics and monitoring approaches are implied in the Goals, Policies, and Opportunities, this Plan does not yet offer a fully developed key performance indicators framework or system for resource tracking. These are important next steps that will require additional input and coordination from Tumwater staff and partners. Establishing shared accountability structures, such as a cross-departmental team or regional advisory group, could help define appropriate performance measures, develop a reporting mechanism, and determine how updates to resource materials are collected and shared over time.

As Tumwater continues this important work, it is recommended that the City consider this Plan a foundational document and explore mechanisms to support ongoing learning, refinement, and implementation, such as establishing a stakeholder advisory group, commissioning deeper analyses of key issue areas, and engaging in broader public input processes. Regional collaboration may also support alignment, resource sharing, and long-term impact across jurisdictions.

APPENDIX A – SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

Aherlow Kasjaka	Thurston Asset Building Coalition
Alyssa Jones Wood	City of Tumwater, Water Resources & Sustainability
Amanda Musser	WSU Extension Thurston County SNAP-Ed
Amanda Romero	Thurston County Public Works
Anita de Boer	Tunawerth LLC
Annie Salafsky	WSU Extension Thurston County, Southwest Washington Growers Cooperative
Bob Gibson	Tumwater School District, Food Services
Carissa Miller	Withywindle Valley Farm
Cathy Visser	True for You Nutrition, LLC.
Chris Hyde	The Food Source Foundation
Christine Ciancetta	WA State Department of Health
Cristian Salazar	Centro Integral Educativo de Olympia (CIELO)
Daniel Amodeo-Chavez	United Way of Thurston County
Deborah Williams	Tumwater Community Garden
Diane Torres	Centro Integral Educativo de Olympia (CIELO)
Hope Springer	Thurston County Public Works
Jake Yancey	Tracking Y Ranch
Jaspar Quinton	Catholic Community Services
Jen Ownbey	8 Arms Bakery
Jennifer Colvin	Colvin Ranch
Jennifer Crain	Slow Food Greater Olympia
Judy Jones	Thurston County Food Bank
Katie Rains	Washington State Dept of Agriculture
Kim Gaffi	Consultant, co-founder GRuB
Kristen Maring	Tumwater High School, FRESH
Kyle Taylor Lucas	Tenants United at Western Plaza Mobile Home Park & Urban Indians Northwest
LeeAnn Perry	Little Free Pantry
Loretta Seppanen	Slow Food Greater Olympia and Community Farm Land Trust member
Mackenzie McCall	Farmer, South Sound Food System Network, formerly with Thurston County Food Bank
Maegan Cote	Mt. View Church
Maggie Brown	Thurston County Public Works
Margaret Garrett	Educational Service District 101
Marilyn Sitaker	WSU Thurston County Extension, Southwest Washington Food Hub
Megumi Sugihara	Everyone's Food Sovereignty Alliance
Meredith Arseneau	Educational Service District 113
Michaela Winkley	Thurston County Food Bank
Mitch Lewis	Summit Farms, Tumwater Farmers' Market
Morgan Hartline	Washington State Dept of Health

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Nora White	Thurston Conservation District
Peter Epperson	Retired, formerly with regional public and nonprofit service organizations
Peter Guttchen	Formerly with Thurston County Public Works, WA Dept of Ecology
Rebekah Graham	Thurston County Food Bank
Robby Rutledge	Rutledge Family Farm
Senior Council	City of Tumwater, Old Town Center
Shawn Crimmins	City of Tumwater, Fire Department
Shelly Willis	Family Education & Support Services (FESS)
Stephanie Penland	Senior Services of South Sound
Theresa Kimball	Wild Fun Farm
Tina Sharp	Thurston Economic Development Council
Tina Wagner	Thurston Conservation District
TJ Johnson	Urban Futures Farm, Thurston Conservation District
Todd Anderson	City of Tumwater, Parks & Recreation
Treacy Kreger	Vern's Foods, Our Community Kitchen, South Sound Fresh

APPENDIX B – SURVEY & INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Survey Instrument

These questions were set up as text boxes in an online survey tool. Any question could be skipped.

1. How would you describe your role in our local food system (for example: grower, distributor, processor, retailer, advocate, member of a community organization, chef, educator, waste manager, policymaker, etc.)? Please include your title and the name of your business or organization if applicable.
2. What do you think is the biggest challenge people face when trying to get local, nutritious food?
3. What unmet needs, challenges, or barriers do you see in your role or in your sector of the local food system?
4. What new issues or changes are happening in your part of the food system?
5. How do things like prices, demand, or outside markets affect your part of the food system?
6. In your view, how has climate change or climate change mitigation impacted the work you do in the food system?
7. How do you or your sector of the food system approach food-related waste?
8. How does food-related waste management impact your part of the food system?
9. What opportunities or ideas do you see for improving the way food is grown, shared, eaten, or disposed of in our area?
10. Do you currently collaborate with other organizations or individuals in the local food system? If yes, please list and/or describe these collaborations.
11. Do you feel there are any current policies or practices in Tumwater that make it easier or harder to have a strong local food system? If so, please describe.
12. What new policies or practices could Tumwater implement to support a better local food system?
13. Have you seen any great ideas or successful programs in other places that you think could work here in Tumwater?
14. Is there anything else you would like us to know about Tumwater's food system or your experiences/ideas?

Interview Questions

These questions were used as a general framework to guide conversations.

1. When you think about our local food system, what comes to mind?
2. How would you describe your role in the local food system?
3. What is the biggest barrier to accessing local, nutritious food?
4. What are some emerging issues in your sector of the food system?
5. What unmet needs, challenges, or barriers do you see in your sector of the food system?
6. How is your sector impacted by external market forces?
7. How is your sector impacted by climate change?
8. How has your sector been affected by waste management practices?
9. What are the biggest upcoming or current opportunities for improving our local food system that you know about?
10. What policies or practices are currently in place in Tumwater that hinder a thriving local food system from your sector's perspective?
11. What policies or practices could we enact in Tumwater to support a thriving local food system from your sector's perspective?
12. Are there any best practices you have seen in other places you would like to see replicated in Tumwater?
13. Is there anyone else you think I should speak to?

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