

LOCAL FOOD AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Central Ohio and Weinland Park



Mid-Ohio Regional
Planning Commission

February 18, 2015
Louisville, Ky.

What is local food?



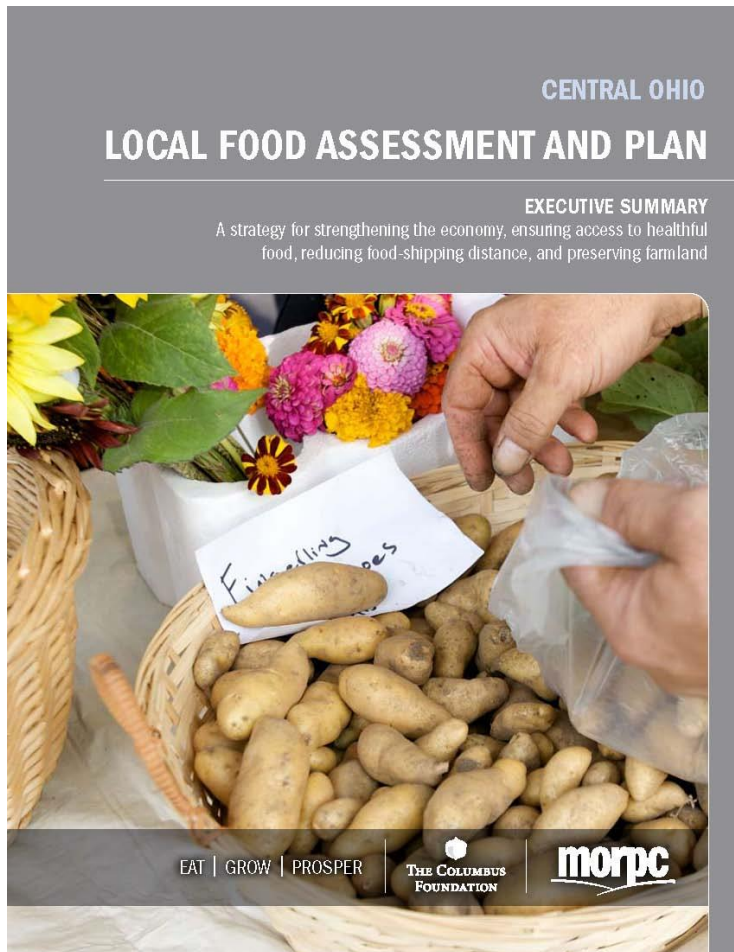
What is local food?



Local food is Economic Development



Local food planning



- 2010 regional plan
- Local food councils
- Regional food council
- Seek coordination on projects in region
- Economic development strategies



Food District
@ weinland park

Background

- Industrial neighborhood, Southeast of OSU, two miles north of State Capitol
- Factories faded, prosperity plummeted, crime climbed
- Section 8, transience, poverty, health issues
- Environmental cleanup of two large industrial sites
- Hints of gentrification, outpouring of OSU and civic attention, re-investment



Food District Planning

- \$864,000 HUD Community Challenge grant to MORPC
- Team of subgrantees: The Ohio State University, Local Matters, Wagenbrenner Development, Civic Association, Godman Guild
- Neighborhood priority: Jobs
- Planning goals shifted to food processing
- Plan proposed a three-story building with:
 - food processing
 - kitchen incubator
 - workforce development
 - café and co-op market
 - event space/caterer
 - office space
 - business services
 - rooftop gardens

A Dynamic Vision for the Community



**Economic
Impact**



**Health &
Nutrition**

**Community
Engagement**

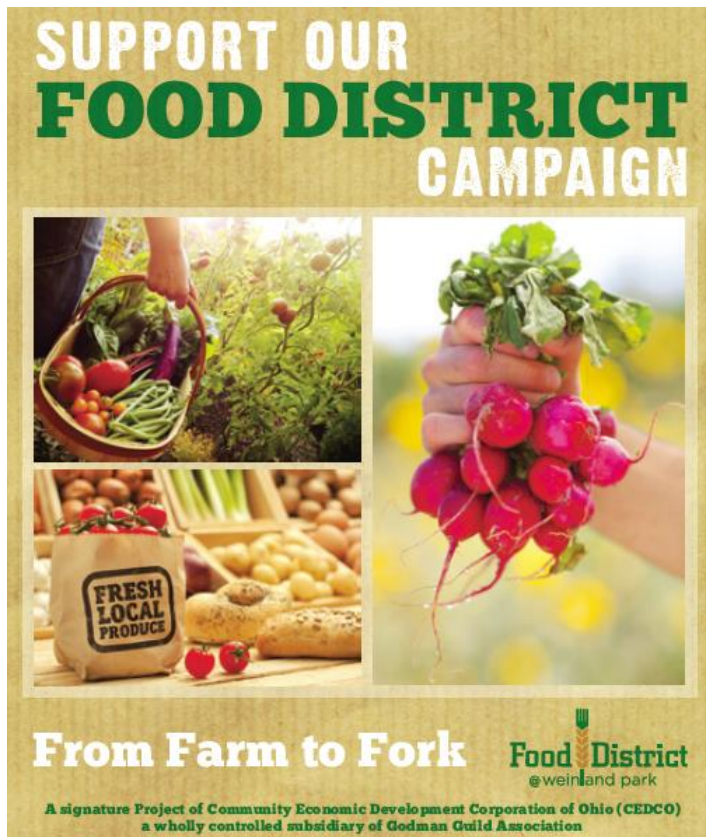
Plan passed on to Community Economic Development Corporation of Ohio, August 2013



The best laid plans ...



The reality:



- Skepticism: Too much at once?
- Financing
- Real estate availability
- Economic development strategies
- Finding coattails to ride

The challenge:

- Build in phases; more-focused
- Make adjustments, but don't change core mission
- Jobs & economic development
- Find business partners
- Food processing that is part of a regional food system



The latest:

- Larger site, four blocks away (same developer)
- Many food-related businesses on a 30-acre former factory site
- Considering high-pressure pasteurization
- City support for plan
- Job-training facility to serve all businesses on the site



One-word summary:

Business

Elaboration:

- Even a non-profit social enterprise must be a viable business
- Business leaders at planning table
- Build on existing food businesses
- Develop new models, partnerships

Central Ohio Regional Food Council



Original mission:

Share ideas among local councils

New mission:

- Assign task forces to identify various supply-chain gaps and barriers
- Encourage and facilitate new, collaborative business models
- Enlist business support when policy changes are needed
- Bring funders, lenders to the table
- Coordinate efforts in region to avoid duplication

Meat Industry Task Force:

- Look for bottlenecks in the region's meat-processing capacity
- Study the industry, talk to experts
- Identified lack of cold-storage
- Bring together key players up and down the supply chain; present findings
- Lock the door until they agree on a solution



Distribution & Logistics Task Force:



- Entrepreneur developed online “virtual food hub”
- Distributors want tool for logsitics, not for sales and business relationships
- Bring together farmers, distributors, processors, entrepreneurs, etc., to develop a model that helps all players
- Utilize existing businesses, trucks, infrastructure

Food Waste Task Force:

- More restaurants, institutions seek to compost waste
- Composters lack capacity or face other challenges
- Task force will study: Market problems? Regulatory? Both?
- Bring together solid waste authority, EPA, composters, food businesses, haulers, etc. to hammer out a solution



Think systemically





Mid-Ohio Regional
Planning Commission

BRIAN WILLIAMS

bwilliams@morpc.org

111 Liberty Street, Suite 100
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Phone: 614.223.4187

www.morpc.org

