

FPC Stakeholder Interviews

Introduction:

In order to gain a better understanding of some of FPC's greatest strengths, potential weaknesses, opportunities for food systems change, and challenges of taking advantage of those opportunities, the FPC conducted 27 interviews with various FPC stakeholders. The interviews were conducted by FPC's strategic planning team, and averaged about 45 minutes to an hour for any given interview. Some interviewees are long-time members of the FPC and were able to shed some light on FPC's historic challenges and accomplishments, while others had had no previous involvement with FPC, and provided insights into new opportunities for engagement and food systems change. For a full list of interviewees, please see the list in the back of this report. These interviews are not meant to represent the total population of FPC member-hood, nor are they to represent the absolute future directions on which FPC should focus. They rather stand to convey a glimpse into some perceptions or FPC's past, present, and future, in order to open our eyes to new outlooks, new possibilities, and new obstacles. We hope that as you read over this interview data that you will notice some emerging trends and concepts, but that you also won't lose sight of some ideas and important frameworks that you yourself conceive for FPC's future.

What is FPC's Niche or Important Role?

Most Frequent Suggestions	# times mentioned
Communicating with/collaborating/networking other organizations together	8
Policy	7
Improving food access	5
Systems change	5
Promote/enable economic development and job creation	3
Seeing and understanding the big picture of the food system	3
Research-based work	3
Raising awareness about food system related issues	2

Where should FPC focus geographically?

Most Frequent Suggestions	Reasoning	# times mentioned
Cuyahoga County	Larger impact than Cleveland, not as ambiguous as NEO	7
Northeast Ohio	More people to impact, potential partners, and marketing reach	6
Focus on Cleveland, then Cuyahoga County, then NEO (Similar to current)	A Food system can't be encompassed by Cleveland or Cuyahoga County, but the focus of our impact should be on Cleveland, and then Cuyahoga County	5
Cleveland and first ring suburbs	All the need isn't encompassed by Cleveland	3
Focus on Cleveland and then Cuyahoga County	Cleveland should be the focus but policies can be replicated in Cuyahoga County	3
Cleveland	This is where the need for our work is the strongest.	2

FPC's Strengths

Most Frequent Suggestions	# times mentioned
Influencing food related policy in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County	12
Coordinating and networking other organizations	10
Impact at the City of Cleveland level	5
Relationships with policy makers/government representatives	4
Working specifically with Farmers' Markets and Produce Perks	4
Strong leadership/Morgan Taggart's role	3
Expertise in food systems	3
Well Respected/ well known	3
Increasing food access	3
Promoting the existence of urban agriculture	3
Inclusive and diverse membership	3
Convening information and a relationship between the government and the community	2

FPC's Weaknesses

Most Frequent Suggestions	# times mentioned
Communicating our structure, and roles, and establishing meetings	3
Limited resources (staff and funding) and reliance on very few human resources	3
People do not know about us	2
A lack of diversity and inclusion	2
Impact at the county level	2
Impact at the NEO level	2

Opportunities to Leverage Food Systems Change

Most Frequent Suggestions	# times mentioned
Changing people's eating habits/lifestyle/nutrition	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education to the public about healthy eating and nutrition 	4
Continue to build the local food system supply chain network	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local food processing 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Food processing in suburban industrial parks ○ Cleveland Crops Processing facility 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local food distribution 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurants 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Side Market 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help producers aggregate to sell their product 	2
Policy and projects on the county level outside of Cleveland	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train organizational leaders to replicate work done in Cleveland 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect local initiatives to broader regional markets 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact the suburbs with policy that was successful in Cleveland 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School gardening in the suburbs 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant land re-use at county level 	1
Media/Publicity/Be recognized	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose partners that can help with marketing 	1

• Share knowledge with other local food movement organizations	1
• Create a marketing strategy for locally grown foods	1
Establish urban agriculture as an economic development opportunity	6
• Hire for an FPC position to focus on economic development	1
Continue to collaborate and network	3
• Collaborate with institutions	1
○ Utilize current institutional connections (OSUE, CWRU'S PRC)	1
○ Collaborate with hospitals	1
▪ Collaborate with the Cleveland Clinic	1
• Support or collaborate with parallel efforts of other organizations	3
○ Partner with local food initiatives	1
▪ Connect with Healthy Cleveland	1
○ Collaborate with Greater Cleveland Congregations and faith based organizations	1
• Connect with the Cuyahoga County Board of Health	1
• Consider outside demand for FPC technical assistance	1
• Connect with the business community	1
• Better connect residents and the community with local food	1
• Connect with funders	1
The political atmosphere and community interest is strong	
• Food system issues are very relevant and “trendy” right now	4
• There is a lot of political will in Cleveland	2
• There is national interest in our efforts	1
Policy	3
Food Access	4
• Systems Change approach to food access	1
Other Specific Initiatives and Ideas	
• Incentivize grocery stores back in Cleveland	1
• Get Fresh food into corner stores	1
• Vacant Land re-use	3
○ Vacant homes	1
• Incorporate agriculture into green space	1
• Host service days to volunteer at local farms and connect with minority farmers	1
• Educate individuals how to grow their own food	1
• Utilize our current information, data, and expertise	2

Challenges to Creating Food Systems Change

Most Frequent Suggestions	# of times mentioned
Funding and limited financial resources	5
Staying relevant	4
Creating a common agenda with a diverse set of stakeholders	4
Negative perceptions or misconceptions about urban agriculture	3
People don't know about us	2
A lack of diversity	2
Cuts to SNAP and food assistance programs	2

Priority Areas for FPC's Work

Most Frequent Suggestions	# times mentioned
Food access and food security	11
Farm to School	7
Local/regional supply chain development	5
Institutional purchasing (notably with hospitals)	4
General local purchasing policy	4
Creating and demonstrating economic development	4
Providing nutrition and food system education to the general public and residents	4
Local food processing and distribution	4
Coordinating growers	4
General urban agriculture policy	3
Advocacy surrounding the cuts to SNAP	3
Working with grocery stores to improve access to healthy foods	3
Working with corner stores to improve access to healthy foods	3
General policy and advocacy	3
Ensuring land access and land access equity	2
Evaluation and maintaining current initiatives	2
Providing or finding funding for urban growers	2
Healthy food affordability	2

Why does your organization/ agency work with FPC?

Most Frequent Suggestions	# times mentioned
FPC aligns with their organization's mission or goals (particularly in regards to food access)	8
FPC has expertise in food systems	5
The actual policies we have created benefit their work	3
Our work is research based, which helps qualify their work	3
FPC has access to power and government officials	2
FPC is action oriented and gets things done	2
FPC provides their organization with a network of other organizations they can collaborate with	2
FPC's specific programs related to farmers' markets have benefited their work	2

Perception and Reputation of FPC

Most Frequent Suggestions	# times mentioned
Great reputation	7
Great reputation and well-known in small circle of organizations, but not well known beyond that	6
Known by the association with Morgan Taggart, or OSU Extension	5
FPC is unknown	3
Great reputation but not well known	2

How well does FPC communicate with the larger Community?

On a Scale of 1 to 5: Average = 2.17

Key Stakeholders to Engage (Both Current and Prospective)

Most Frequent Suggestions (By Type of Organization and Specific Organizations)	# times mentioned
Government	3
• City of Cleveland government	8
• Cuyahoga County government	1
• Department of Health and Human Services	1
• Cuyahoga County Board of Health	2
• Sustainable Cleveland 2019	1
• Cuyahoga County Department of Economic Development	1
• District County Representatives	1
• Department of Regional Collaboration	1
• Cuyahoga County Planning Commission	1
• Federal Government representatives	1
• USDA Soil and Water	1
• Mayors and Managers Association	1
Service Agencies / Non-Profits	5
• Community Development Corporations	4
• Food banks and food pantries	5
• OSU Extension	2
• Sisters of Charity	1
• Cuyahoga County Land Bank	1
• Neighborhood Solutions Inc.	1
• Foundation Center	1
• Policy Matters Ohio	1
• Cuyahoga Valley Countryside Conservancy	1
• Settlement Houses	1
• Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland	1
• Greater Cleveland Congregations	1
• Soil and Water Conservation Districts	1
• Change Lab Solutions	1
• Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium (NEOSCC)	1
• Growhio	1
• Cleveland Botanical Gardens	1
• Organizations with a regional lens	1
• National organizations	
Food businesses	5
• Grocery Stores	3
o Professional Trade Associations for Growers	1
• Restaurants	2

• West Side Market	1
• Farmers' Markets	1
○ North Union Farmers' Markets	1
Producers and Gardeners	3
• RidALL Green Partnership	2
• Summer Sprout Gardeners	1
• Green City Growers	1
• Ohio City Farm	1
• Refugee Response	1
• City Rising Farm	1
• Orange Village Community Gardens	1
Funders	3
• Fund for our Economic Future	2
• Cleveland Foundation	2
• George Gund Foundation	1
• St. Luke's Foundation	1
• Mt. Sinai Healthcare Foundation	1
• National funders	1
Hospitals and healthcare institutions	3
Residents or block leaders	3
Economic development organizations	2
• Planners/designers/architects	1
Schools	3
• Cleveland Metropolitan School District	1
• Universities	1
Other organizations or representation	
• Historians	1
• Representatives of the transportation sector	1

Interviews Conducted

Interviewee	Organization
Anne Goodman	Cleveland Foodbank
Bobbi Reichtell	Campus District
Dr. Casey Hoy	Ohio State University
Claire Kilbane	County Planning Commission
Elle Adams	City Rising Farm
Emily Garr Pacetti	Fund for our Economic Future
Eric Wobser	Ohio City Inc., Cleveland Metropolitan School District
Freddy Collier	Cleveland City Planning Commission
Grace Gallucci	NOACA
Heather Torok	St. Lukes Foundation
Jenny Kelley	Growhio, Kelly Green Web, Market Connect
Jill Clark	Ohio State University
Jim Thompson	Ohio State University Extension
Joe Cimperman	Cleveland City Council
John Mitterholzer	The Gund Foundation
Kathy Mulcahy	Mayor of Orange Village
Kristen Matlack	Ohio State University Extension
Mansfield Frazier	Neighborhood Solutions Inc.
Marcia Fudge	Congresswoman
Marcy Kaptur	U.S. Representative
Marie-Joy Paredes	Cleveland Clinic
Mary Donnell	Green City Growers
Nate Kelly	Cuyahoga County's Office of the Executive
Nelson Beckford	The Cleveland Foundation
Randy McShepard	Policy Bridge, Rid-ALL Green Partnership, Growing Power Regional Training Center, Gund Foundation
Teleange Thomas	Sisters of Charity Foundation
Tracey Lind	Trinity Commons, Greater Cleveland Congregation

Key Advice

“Strengthen FPC recognition. Residents need to know who FPC is. Expand the message base. Who do you want to have the information?”

“Enhance communication. More effectively define the role, the agenda, and what they are working on ... Clarify their strategy and role on issues and relationships ... What really is the process, focus, and voice of the coalition?”

“Focus. Focus on outcomes and on new needs in the food system”

“Find the most critical needs and fill them”

“Be the clearinghouse and communicate with elected officials”

“Communicate to those that are not in the choir”

“Focus to have more impact”

“Promote your work. Promote your learnings”

“Pick a high visibility issue, deliver on it, and broadcast this widely”

“Make our goals specific and make a plan to get there. If we aim to help a large area ... we will have a diffuse impact ... We shouldn't take on all ideas with our limited resources”

“Don't lose sight of your roots. FPC has always been about people and the importance of food access. Have a better communication strategy”

“Keep up the good work”

“Get info out to people!”

“Have extensive diversity training and embrace inclusion”

“Continue to cultivate more inside advocates”

“Be more aggressive”

“Identify the value proposition of FPC”

“Better communication with people in this space”

“Getting the word out to clients, stakeholders, and partners”

“Bring clarity to the organization structure ... There is room for one strong food related non-profit organization. Cement the opportunity by clarifying the FPC's organizational structure”

“Consider developing a clear idea of what the coalition is in the state and across the nation, because Cleveland is leading ... Articulate what you want to contribute as well as what you need regionally and nationally”

“Refine your focus. Think strategically and systematically. Don't lose sight of policy.”

“Make the connection between local access and regional markets”

“Figure out who you want to be ... What is your mission? Be true to your name”

“Make sure community members from neighborhoods that are struggling with food access are involved”