

**The Mayor's
Ad Hoc Task Force
on
Municipal Food Policy**



Final Report

June, 1985

Introduction

In June, 1984, the United States Conference of Mayors invited Saint Paul to participate in a pilot project to study the advisability of adopting a municipal food policy similar to that of Knoxville, TN. The Conference has found that hunger, malnutrition and joblessness are creating increased concern in American communities despite the recent economic recovery.

In the fall of 1984, Saint Paul joined Philadelphia, Charleston (SC), and Kansas City (MO) in the USCM project which was sponsored by the American Can Company and the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation.

The Saint Paul Ad Hoc Task Force on Municipal Food Policy has found that there are many roles the City does and should play in assuring the adequacy and quality of its food supply to its citizens. Therefore, it recommends that a food policy be developed and that a Food and Nutrition Commission be established for two years for that purpose. This report summarized issues for further study and activities in which the City can participate.

The Saint Paul Food System and City Productivity

Minnesota is an agricultural state which has 60% of its land in agricultural use. Agribusiness represents 40% of the state's economy. However, it is estimated that 75-85% of the City's food is imported from outside Minnesota. Food is a big business in the city. In 1983, \$380 million was spent on groceries and "food-away-from-home" purchases, which represents more than \$1.0 million per day or three times the City budget of 1983.

Dependence on outside resources, while it provides variety, has several negative results. First, by relying on long-distance food suppliers, the quality and nutritional value of the food supply is poorer than food produced nearer to the market. Secondly, the mass production of food to be transported long distances often has harmful effects on the environment because it encourages use of harmful pesticides and discourages conservation methods of farming. Thirdly, buying from long distances diminishes the market for Minnesota-grown products and fuels the rural economic crisis in Minnesota.

Therefore, the task force recommends the following actions to encourage local production and to help maintain existing state productivity:

- * Support state and national farm policies which help maintain family farms in Minnesota

- * Support and develop educational programs which create greater awareness between rural and urban Minnesotans
- * Encourage the purchase of Minnesota-grown products, especially in city-managed food services
- * Study the development of a comprehensive city land use plan
- * Assist in providing markets for Minnesota-grown products, e.g. work with growers to encourage institutional purchase of Minnesota products
- * Review zoning ordinances which are barriers to home production
- * Review City laws and regulations pertaining to use permits, taxing, fees, licensing as they affect availability, access and improvement of food to all citizens
- * Enlist the support and active assistance of all City Departments and District Councils to promote a citywide food policy
- * Develop emergency food plan as part of Disaster Planning at state and local level
- * Study city uses of "edible landscaping"
- * Encourage public land for urban food production
- * Study the acquisition by the City of surrounding agricultural land either through purchase of development rights, through contract with a land trust or through actual purchase of land
- * Participate in the metropolitan area Agricultural Preservations Act as an interested party

Consumer Issues

A. Access

The task force has been presented with information that shows low-income citizens, especially those living in neighborhoods not served by a major food distributor, have restricted access to fairly-priced and high-quality food. Often, these individuals must rely on convenience stores which have limited and high-priced selections. Such stores often have a limited supply of fresh produce, for example, and the supply of food is often highly processed to withstand long shelf lives.

The transportation system into poorer neighborhoods may not supply easy access to large supermarkets in other neighborhoods.

The use of food stamps may be restricted or not even possible in certain stores and food outlets, such as the Farmer's Market.

The poor have limited land and financial resources with which to produce food to supplement their diet.

Therefore, the task force makes the following recommendations so that access to quality food is available to all and so that low-income persons can increase their

self-reliance in supplying parts of their own food supply:

- * Assist and encourage homegrown and home-preserved foods
- * Develop food stamp redemption centers at farmers' markets
- * Set up a system of community gardens and community canning facilities
- * Help institutions serving low-income people to develop programs which promote individual food production
- * Assist in the development of small stores and alternative food sources, such as buying clubs
- * Work with major retailers to establish major stores in underserved areas
- * Work with the Regional Transit Board to maintain and to develop transportation from underserved neighborhoods to major retail outlets.

B. Nutritional Status and Education

Records kept by the Saint Paul Division of Public Health show that hunger, malnutrition and related health problems exist in Saint Paul and in Ramsey County. In Ramsey County, four out of five of the leading causes of death are related to the nutritional and dietary practices of the residents. In 1983, 7.5% of the residents screened (Non-WIC participants) were underweight; 4% were of short stature; 5% were overweight, 6.5% were anemic; and 14% were shown to have major dietary problems.

Since hunger and malnutrition are items of major concern for

all of the citizens of Saint Paul, the task force makes the following recommendations:

- * Lobby to increase support for state and federal nutrition programs
- * City staff should develop nutrition promotion programs for use by all food retailers, especially those in low-income neighborhoods
- * City should continue outreach programs and encourage outreach by other programs, such as the "Meals on Wheels"
- * Work with school districts to develop a summer meals program
- * Lobby state and federal government on the need for more research on food quality as it relates to production practices
- * Require environmentally sound production practices on city-owned land put into food (and other horticultural) production.

Emergency Food System and Changes in Welfare System

The City's charitable/emergency food system has had increasing use in recent years and faces continuing increases. The use of the St. Paul Food Bank increased from distribution of two million pounds of food in 1982 to 4.5 million in 1983. In 1984 the Food Bank distributed eight million pounds of food to food shelves in the area. Food shelf programs of the United Way have shown a 40% increase in usage in 1982, a 69% increase in usage in 1983 and a 28% increase in 1984.

Over 60,000 meals were served at Loaves and Fishes in 1984. Noon meals served at Dorothy Day increased 6.8% in 1983 and evening meals increased 8.6% in the same time period.

Therefore, the task force makes the following recommendations:

*Support continuation and increased funding of the "Safety net" programs supporting the poor in our city, including General Assistance, AFDC, WIC, food stamps and the school lunch and congregate dining programs

Rural Crisis and Consequences for Urban Consumers

Today the farmer gets a smaller share of the food dollar than at any time since the Great Depression. In 1983, according to the USDA, consumers spent more than \$315 billion on foods originating on American farms. About \$230.2 billion went into marketing costs including processing and shipping to stores. The farmer realized only about \$84.9 million or less than 30% of the total dollars spent on food.

The impacts on the family farm have been severe as a result. The 1981 farm net income has fallen to \$4,400 per family. Farms are disappearing at a rate of 1,500 per year over the last decade. It is estimated that for every seven to ten farms lost in Minnesota, one mainstreet business is lost.

As farmers and businesses alike leave the rural area, migration to metropolitan Minnesota increases the need for jobs and services in cities and surrounding areas. As family farms die, city consumers must rely more heavily on long-distance suppliers which may increase marketing costs and decrease the quality of the food available.

Therefore, the task force recommends that:

- * Wherever possible the City use its resources to support Minnesota farmers
- * Encourage a Minnesota-grown food procurement policy in city institutions
- * Facilitate the interaction between major food buyers and local producers

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Recommended Resolution

**Attachment B: Resolution Establishing Task Force,
Dated September 20, 1984**

Attachment C: Members of the Task Force

Attachment D: List of Those Who Testified

A.

MUNICIPAL FOOD POLICY

WHEREAS, the Mayor's Ad Hoc Task Force was established to study the advisability of developing a municipal food policy to ensure the availability of an adequate and nutritious food supply to the citizens of the City of Saint Paul; and

WHEREAS, the task force has met on numerous occasions to gather testimony on the municipal food system including the emergency food system, the growers and suppliers of the city's food, the nutritional status of the city residents, and consumer concerns in the city; and

WHEREAS, the task force has found that:

- * use of the emergency food system, including food shelves, Loaves and Fishes and soup kitchens, has dramatically increased
- * the current structure of the city food system relies heavily on distant suppliers which provides variety but not necessarily high quality food or a strong, varied state and local economy
- * the rural economic crisis may have severe impacts on the city due to in-migration of rural people and weakens the state economy
- * the elimination or decrease in funding of state and federal assistance programs, such as WIC, General Assistance, school lunch programs, senior congregation dining programs and food stamps, will have an adverse impact on the availability of adequate food for the low-income citizens of Saint Paul
- * indicators of the nutritional status of city residents show that hunger, malnutrition, and related health problems exist in Saint Paul

- * consumers, especially low-income consumers, in some areas of the city, have limited access to food retailers who supply less costly and more nutritious food
- * the capacity of the city to produce and supplement its food supply is underutilized, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Saint Paul has a role in actively encouraging the availability of an adequate, nutritious and equitably-priced food supply to all its citizens, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Saint Paul and its agencies should seek to develop programs which will improve and secure the food supply to the citizens, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the task force recommends to the Mayor and City Council that a Food and Nutrition Commission be established for two years ending June 1987, that it consist of nine members who reflect a broad spectrum of the city's population, appointed by the Mayor, and that it should be instructed to develop a city food policy, to advise on ways to encourage the availability of the food supply, and to work to address urban food issues with the City of Minneapolis and other interested communities.

Council Resolution

Presented By James Scheibel, Dan Deen, William Nelson

Referred To _____ Committee: _____ Date _____

Out of Committee By _____ Date _____

WHEREAS, as a result of Federal and State reductions in funding of social welfare programs, hunger and the availability of an adequate and nutritious food supply has become of greater concern to the City of St. Paul; and

WHEREAS, the Greater St. Paul Community Foodbank has seen a 100% increase in food distributed from 2 million pounds in 1982 to 4 million pounds in 1983 and local emergency feeding programs have doubled meals served in that same period; and

WHEREAS, greater self reliance in food production may help lessen the City's dependence on food supplies that are produced by energy intensive methods and that must be transported over long distances; and

WHEREAS, the United States Conference of Mayors has selected the City of Saint Paul, together with Charleston, SC; Philadelphia, PA and Kansas City, MO to participate in a pilot project to develop a municipal food policy similar to that developed by Knoxville, TN; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council believe food supply and hunger are subjects which have a serious impact on the City of Saint Paul and are worthy of study; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council have agreed to participate in this project by appointing an ad hoc study group to address the issue and make recommendations;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council do hereby approve the establishment of the Mayor's Ad Hoc Task Force on Municipal Food Policy which is directed to study the advisability of establishing a municipal food policy. This task force should consist of no more than 20 members and should include representatives of the religious and academic community as well as representatives of emergency food assistance programs. The task force shall make its recommendation to the Mayor and City Council no later than February 15, 1985.

COUNCILMEN

Yeas	Nays	
Fluckiger	FLUCK	
Drew		7 In Favor
Masanz		
Nicosia		0 Against
Scheibel		
Telesco		
Wilson		

Adopted by Council: _____ Date SEP 20 1984

Certified Passed by Council Secretary _____

By _____

Approved by Mayor: _____ Date 9-21-84 SEP 24 1984

By _____

Requested by Department of: _____

By _____

Form Approved by City Attorney _____

By _____

Approved by Mayor for Submission to Council _____

By George Palmer

MAYOR'S AD HOC TASK FORCE ON MUNICIPAL FOOD POLICY

Councilman James Scheibel, Chair

Diane Ahrens, Ramsey County Commissioner

Sidney Applebaum, Rainbow Foods

Katherine Cairns, Director
St. Paul-Ramsey County Nutrition Program

Richard Dana, Homegrown Economy Project
Saint Paul Department of Planning & Economic Development

Councilman John Drew

Willis Eken, President
Minnesota Farmers Union

Ron Farris, Control Data Corporation

Cheryl Fowler, Director
Greater Minneapolis Foodbank

✓ William Frawley, Minnesota Department of Economic Security

✓ Reverend Richard Goebel, Director
St. Paul Food Bank/Emergency Fund Service

✓ Gary Miller, St. Paul Foundation

Roy Mormon, Capitol City Coop

Caye Nelson, Director
Ramsey County Extension Service

Reverend Robert Porter

Roger Sitkin, Hmong Agriculture Program

Ron Smith
Coordinator Coalition for the Homeless

✓ Ken Taylor, Executive Director
Minnesota Food Association

Sharon Vansgness, Minnesota Foodbank Network

✓ Kathy Zachary, Vice President
District Council 4

PEOPLE WHO PRESENTED TESTIMONY

1. Nancy Amidei
2. Luci Arimond, Loaves & Fishes
3. Barbara Arrell, Ramsey County Home
Delivered Meals Program
("Meals-on-Wheels")
4. Verlene Booker, Senior Nutrition Program,
Ramsey Action Program
5. Judy Browne, University of Minnesota
School of Public Health
6. Katherine Cairns, Saint Paul-Ramsey County
Nutrition Program
7. Kate Dienhart, W.I.C. Program
8. Willis Eken, Minnesota Farmers Union
9. John Flory, Capital City Coop
10. Cheryl Fowler, Greater Minneapolis Foodbank
11. Richard Goebel, Greater Saint Paul Foodbank
12. Merianne Haehnel
13. Greg Harris, Ramsey Action Program
14. Joel Hoiland, MN Food Retailers Association
15. Jean Langhaugh, HEADSTART
16. David Morris, Center for Self-Reliance
17. Gene Nelson, Grocery Store Survey Coordinator, R.A.P.
18. Richard Neumeister
19. Jane North
20. Roger Sitkin, MN Agricultural Enterprise for New Americans,
U of M Agricultural Extension Service
21. Margo Stark, Minnesota Food Association
22. Sharon Vangness, Minnesota Foodbank Network