“Informational Meeting on the Food Policies of the Comprehensive Plan of Sarasota County”

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Presentation Outline

• Comprehensive Plan of Sarasota County
• Existing Food Policies Review
• Sarasota County’s Food Policies
  – Context and background
  – History and process of development phase
  – Process of implementation phase
  – Current status
  – Next steps
Tom Harmer: Help update Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan

By TOM HARMER, Guest Columnist
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The Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan guides the county’s decision-making and the wise investments of resources in the unincorporated areas of the county. Sarasota County is beginning an effort to update this important, overarching plan to reflect changes to our community characteristics and demographics, and, just as important, preparing for how we want to develop and grow.

The county’s Comprehensive Plan covers much more than just development and growth, however. Planning for a thriving community is just as much about the future of our libraries, educational systems and infrastructure.
The Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) is an official public document adopted by the Sarasota County Commission to guide decision-making related to the physical development of the county.

The contents of the plan are all-inclusive, general and long range.

- "All-inclusive" means that the plan addresses all geographical parts of the community and all functional elements that can affect physical, cultural and community development.
- "General" means that it includes general policies and designations, not detailed regulations.
- "Long range" means that the plan looks beyond pressing current issues to the problems and possibilities of years in the future.

For Individual Chapters of Plan see https://www.scgov.net/CompPlan/Pages/default.aspx
AGRICULTURE POLICY AMENDMENTS
TO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Chapter 9 - Future Land Use Chapter

Goal 1
Preserve, protect and restore the integrity of the natural environment, historic and archeological resources, neighborhoods and preserve agricultural uses consistent with resource protection.

Objective 1.3
To preserve and protect agricultural lands.

Policy 1.3.1
Within the Rural Area, as designated on the Future Land Use Map, the approval of development shall acknowledge that the preservation of agricultural lands is a primary function of the Rural Area and is necessary for a sustainable community. Land management activities associate with agricultural activities may be incompatible with other development. However, such management activities are considered to be an essential element of the preservation of successful operations on agricultural lands and the continuation of such activities shall take precedence. Approved development of all parcels will be evaluated for compatibility to adjacent small and large scale farms.
Policy 1.3.2

Within the Semi-Rural Area, as designated on the Future Land Use Map, the continuation of existing agricultural uses shall be allowed and shall not be deemed incompatible with existing or subsequent or residential nearby uses. However, the expansion of such agricultural uses, for example, shall use appropriate techniques for furthering compatibility with existing uses while balancing the need to foster sustainable communities. Approved development of all parcels will be evaluated for compatibility to adjacent small and large scale farms.
Policy 1.3.3
The county will support the implementation of a sustainable agriculture program to promote sustainable agriculture practices on private and publicly owned lands. The program may include but shall not be limited to the following:

- Provisions for community gardens and farms, as well as farmers markets
- Coordination with neighborhood planning efforts and subdivision review to provide adequate land for community gardens, farms, and farmers markets
- Where appropriate, encourage the use of county parks for community gardens and farms, as well as farmers markets
- Incentive-based programs for agricultural lands in all areas that use sustainable farming practices
- Encouraging the School Board to use locally grown foods in the daily school breakfast and lunch programs
- Encouraging the expansion of existing agricultural uses and development of new business involved in agriculture such as new agricultural technologies and infrastructure to allow operational activities of urban and small scale agricultural opportunities.
- Support for institutional purchasing from local agriculture
- Support for a local food marketing strategy
- Support an assessment of the community food system in order to promote profitable small and large farms and alternative enterprises to sustain economically viable agricultural communities and to preserve the agricultural heritage of Sarasota County.
- Support for protection initiatives (e.g., farmland trusts, farmland mitigation, conservation easements, etc.) and small farms.
Chapter 2 - Environment Chapter

Goal 4
Protect, maintain, and, where necessary, restore the natural resources of Sarasota County to ensure their continued high quality and critical value to the quality of life in the County.

Objective 4.7
Increase the environmental awareness and sustainable behavior of all County residents.

Policy 4.7.8
The County shall support the implementation of Best Management Practices, as provided by the Sustainable Agriculture programs of the state and USDA, for local agriculture as a means of public education of sustainable agriculture’s role in reducing our ecological footprint and in maintaining a healthy and sustainable environment.

Policy 4.7.9
Encourage and support the development and adoption of sustainable farming practices, as provided by the Sustainable Agriculture Programs of the state and the USDA, in order to:
- promote utilization of agricultural commodities and technologies that are better adapted to local growing conditions and less demanding of water resources
- promote environmental enhancement on all farms and ranches to provide connectivity with adjacent conservation lands
- promote establishment of wildlife habitat on agricultural lands that will contribute to habitat corridors and ecosystem functions.
Formed in the 2005 spring as a non-official body, using the Food Policy Council model, with the facilitation of the Sarasota County Extension.

Purpose is to respond to request by county staff to support the activities of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) in the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) of the Comprehensive Plan by developing policy recommendations to sustain agriculture in Sarasota County.

An inclusive group representing the agriculture community of Sarasota County (for example, small and large farmers, ranchers, horticulture, ag suppliers, consumers, organic farmers, grower associations, environmental groups, farmers markets, food industry and vendors, etc.)
Background: Sarasota County Community and Government Sustainability Initiatives

- Florida House Construction (1992)
- Env. Sensitive Lands Protection Program (1999)
- Office of Sustainability Resolution (2002)
- FL Green Building Coalition & Green Local Government Certifications
- Systems Approach Management Policies
  - Watershed Management
  - Integrated Pest Management
  - Community Health Improvement Partnerships
  - Economic Development Council
Background: Sarasota County Ecological Footprint Analysis

Sarasota's Footprint: Percentage Breakdown

- Energy: 59%
- Pasture: 2%
- Fishing Grounds: 3%
- Built Area: 14%
- Forest: 17%
- Crop: 5%

35.6% = *Agriculture-based

Conclusion of the analysis = if everyone on Earth lived as we do in Sarasota Co., we would need 5 planets to provide the natural resources to meet our demands for food, energy, goods & services, & wastes.

Background: Sarasota County Community & Govt Sustainability Initiatives

The Sarasota County, Florida
Roadmap to Sustainability

October 10, 2006

http://www.scgov.net/sustainability/
Stakeholders from diverse food-related sectors to examine how the food system is operating and to develop recommendations on how to improve it.

Action steps include educating officials and the public, shaping public policy, improving coordination between existing programs, and starting new programs.

North American Food Policy Council [http://www.foodsecurity.org/FPC/]
Background: Who Are FPC Stakeholders?

- Farmers, farm organizations, farmer’s markets
- Consumers: CSAs, Co-ops, advocacy groups
- Civic groups & boards, nonprofits & charities, community groups, community gardens
- Community Institutions: schools, hospitals, senior citizen homes and prisons
- Churches, food banks, & soup kitchens
- Restaurants, grocery stores, & wholesalers
- Producers, processors, & distributors
- University & extension
- Local, state and federal government offices
- Regional planners
Recruitment of Sarasota County community foodshed stakeholders to SFPC meetings

Education of food and foodshed-related issues and sustainability concepts

Review of entire County Comprehensive Plan

Consensus-building of food policy recommendations to be submitted to County Commissioners as a public presentation
Background: Local Foodshed or Food System Concept

Defined as the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How of Our Food - From Farm to Plate

Source: EarthFriends. 1995
Background: Current Foodshed Analysis: Non-Integrated & Non-Sustainable

“Agicultural Supplies” (external sources; nonrenewable energy dependency)

Food production (largely technological and removed from society)

Global Food Distribution (nonrenewable energy dependency)

1,500 miles = cited average ‘food miles’ per food unit in the U.S.

Food Preparation and Consumption (fast and cheap but nutrition-challenged)

“Waste products” (environmental pollutants)
Background: Sustainable Agriculture Definition

- Satisfy human food and fiber needs
- Enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base
- Efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls
- Sustain the economic viability of farm operations
- Enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

Source: 1990 Farm Bill Definition
Background: Sustainable Agriculture
Example Concepts

• Stewardship of Both Natural and Human Resources
• Systems Perspective
• Interdisciplinary Efforts in Research and Education
• Making the Transition to Sustainable Agriculture Is a Process
• Achieving the Goals of Sustainable Agriculture Goal Are the Responsibility of All Participants in the Local Food System
Background: Sustainable Foodshed Goals

Healthy Food Production Integrated into Community

56 miles = cited average ‘food miles; for locally produced food

Local Food Distribution Channels

Compost and other products

Food Preparation and Consumption (Nutritious and Healthy)

Goals = Increasing numbers of local farms and food industry using sustainable agriculture in integrated local foodsheds
Background: Local Community Foodshed Concept

- Community-based Food System
  - Community & Social Vitality
  - Small & Medium Scale Farm Viability
  - Economic Development
  - Jobs
  - Growing Food
  - Processing
  - Farmland Preservation
  - Environmental Stewardship
  - Preparing
  - Eating
  - Retailing
  - Distributing

Inner ring – food system components
Outer ring – community-based food system outcomes
Background: Who Is Working On Projects for Community Foodsheds?

- USDA – Sustainable Ag & Research Education Program; Community Food Projects Program
- Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SAWG)
- Foundations, e.g., Kellog
- Hundreds of non-profits (e.g., Community Food Security Coalition), municipalities, and counties
- Thousands of groups worldwide
Background: Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC)

- a North American non-profit started in 1994 started the building a national movement around community food security.
- Key publication “What’s Cooking in Your Food System”: A Guide to Community Food Assessment
- membership-based coalition (325 orgs.)
- Note: CFSC transitioned in 2012 to several separate organizations of national community foodshed projects.
**Background: Local Food Economy Analysis**

Sarasota County Agriculture 2002 Economic Value and Potential

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<th>Consumed Food Total Value*</th>
<th>$ Millions</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Categories:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Home consumed food</td>
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<td>Out of town consumed food</td>
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<th>Agriculture Total Market Value**</th>
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<tr>
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Data sources: *Ken Meter of Crossroads Resource Center;  **Sarasota County Farm Bureau

Conclusion = there is a very large potential for local foodshed economic development
Background: Community Health Indicators

Figure 15. Overweight and obesity by age: United States, 1960-2000

NOTES: Percents for adults are age adjusted. Overweight for children is defined as a body mass index (BMI) at or above the sex and age-specific 95th percentile BMI cut points from the 2000 CDC Growth Charts: United States. Overweight for adults is defined as a BMI greater than or equal to 25 and obesity as a BMI greater than or equal to 30. Obesity is a subset of the percent with overweight. See Data Table for data points graphed, standard errors, and additional notes.

SOURCES: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Examination Survey and National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey.
• This trend is not a recent phenomenon, i.e., predates this data.
• In the context of the overall economic problems, changes in future values and trends were considered too.
Background: ‘Sustainable Community Foodshed Planning’

- ‘Smart Growth’ Land Planning Approach
- ‘Form-based Code’ Land Planning Approach

More Rural

Mixed Land Use Along The Transect

More Urban
Background: Local Food System: Design

Example of Integrated Production

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SMARTCODE</th>
<th>TABLE 19 FOOD PRODUCTION</th>
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### Table 19: Food Production

#### Matrix

- Farm
- Agricultural Plots
- Vegetable Gardens
- Urban Farm
- Community Gardens
- Green Roofs
- Vertical Farm

#### Notes:
- Extensive
- Semi-Intensive
- Intensive

Jaime Correa and Associates
Since formed in 2005, SFPC facilitated over 12 meetings with participants from the diversity of the community food system of Sarasota County.

Policy recommendations were adopted as new agriculture policies in 2 chapters of the Comprehensive Plan of Sarasota County based upon:

- Sustainable agriculture
- Local community foodshed development
- Farmland protection

Sarasota County Commissioners requested SFPC to promote an implementation phase of the food policies.
SFPC conducted community workshops to promote local foodshed development based on:

- the “ReNewAbility” process
  - facilitation of stakeholders with diverse backgrounds and interests
  - identification of individual assets & needs
  - collaboration building for foodshed projects

- promoted public awareness of new food policies of the Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan
Food Policy Implementation
“ReNewAbility” Workshop Process

See the video at http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu/AG/agpolicy.shtml
Next Steps For Consideration

- Engage yourself and the Sarasota County community in the current Comprehensive Plan Update Process, especially concerning food policies.
  - Sign-up for notices on scheduled public workshops
  - First workshop cycle is focusing on ‘Environmental Systems’, i.e., Chapter 2: Environment

For website see https://www.scgov.net/CompPlanUpdate/Pages/default.aspx
Next Steps For Consideration

- Participate in the upcoming reconvening of the Sarasota Food Policy Council for additional information meetings to facilitate community-base input on food policies for the current Comprehensive Plan Update Process
  - evaluate the existing food policies
  - develop input for necessary food policy additions and modifications.

- Sign-up for notices of these upcoming meetings w/ email to rkluson@scgov.net, using subject text of “Sarasota Food Policy Council”