



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 2, 2014

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Ty Whitaker 775-722-3424

The Washoe County Food Policy Council works with the City of Reno to increase access to healthy food

RENO, NV – The Washoe County Food Policy Council (Food Policy Council) is applauding the City of Reno’s recently announced plan to study healthy food access policy for 2014. The City Planning Commission, as part of their February 5 workshop, voted unanimously to amend the Planning Commission goals for the year to include food policy.

“This type of policy has the potential to improve overall health and drive our economy,” said Food Policy Council Chair, Kristi Jamason. “Prior to this decision, food production and access simply have not been visible in the City’s planning documents.”

The new goal will guide Planning Commission efforts to research and identify planning and development policies that can promote healthy food access and support local food production and sales. The spread of healthy food could positively affect multiple areas of Reno life, from food deserts to physical health to economic opportunity.

More than one out of four children in Washoe County is food insecure, according to Census Bureau data analyzed by Feeding America, the nation’s food bank network. Food insecure households lack sufficient food resources for all members to have active, healthy lives. Food insecurity poses serious implications for school/job readiness as well as health. Poor-quality diets contribute to many chronic health problems such as heart disease, cancer, obesity and diabetes. The wide availability of lower-cost, nutrient-poor, calorie-rich foods are thought to contribute to higher rates of disease and illness for those with fewer resources.

“Healthy food policy can help address hunger, where and how locally grown produce is available, urban farming, community gardening, food-related microenterprises and so much more,” said Jamason. “This is a great opportunity to be proactive in creating the change we want to see around food.”

“This is a really big deal,” says Lisa Hill member of the Food Policy Council. “It means that Reno is looking at healthy food access for people who truly need it. There are so many ways that this policy will touch the community for the better. We have a great number of food insecure children who will be positively impacted. In addition to food security, local healthy food is not only a driving force in

our economic growth, but also it is a part of the solution for reducing healthcare costs”.

Interest in local, healthy food is fueling economic growth in the Reno area as evidenced by the recent report that the Great Basin Community Food Co-op is one of the fastest-growing co-ops in the country. Many local restaurants and entrepreneurs increasingly feature locally produced food. In order to meet demand, local food producers are asking for new and clearer guidelines from the City of Reno to further grow their businesses. This is the start of a year-long goal to research and develop suitable policies for Reno. The Food Policy Council believes this effort will spur more great changes for Reno as a city and a community.

The next Planning Commission meeting will be held Wednesday, April 2 at 6 p.m. and will feature a discussion on planning a healthy, sustainable food system for Reno. The Food Policy Council invites the public to come and speak in support of the citywide food policy at City Hall toward the beginning of the meeting. For more information on this Reno City Planning Commission effort or the citywide food policy goal contact Washoe Food Policy Council chair, at chair@wcfpc.org.

###

The mission of the Washoe County Food Policy Council, formed in 2011, is to support a vibrant, healthy and equitable local food system for Washoe County, Nevada. The Food Policy Council's vision is for the County to have a healthy local food system nourishing our community. For more information, please visit www.wcfpc.org.