

Grow Pleasant Hill Coalition and Project Participation Results

This report details the results of the Community Food Systems (CFS) Participation Survey completed by the Grow Pleasant Hill Coalition. The purpose of this evaluation is to understand if the process met the needs of the community and organizations that participated in the multi-year process.

Community Food Systems Program

The CFS Program is housed within the Food Systems Team with Farm, Food, and Enterprise Development Unit with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. The CFS process is a multi-phase, multi-year program that partners with communities to develop and design their local and regional food systems. Phase 1 develops trust within the community and generates a place-based coalition name, vision, mission, and core values; assesses existing conditions within the community food system; and determines priority projects. Phase 2 includes the development of priority projects through technical assistance, research and design that creates momentum and capacity for development and implementation.

Evaluation Methods

The following includes analysis of quantitative and qualitative results collected through an anonymous online survey completed by participants of the Grow Pleasant Hill Coalition. Quantitative results were collected by rank of one to five; from strongly agree to strongly disagree. These results are organized by an aggregated total of agree and strongly agree averages. Qualitative results were collected through open-ended questions.

The survey included questions on the CFS process, coalition development, community impacts, individual impacts, and priority project team development. There were nine (9) total survey respondents out of thirty-three (33) participants.

Contact Information

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Community Food Systems Process

Participants were asked to rate their agreement with the following statements regarding the CFS process:

Statements	Aggregated %
I felt included in the coalition meetings	86%
I understand the CFS process	75%
The technical assistance providers that supported the projects have been good partners	63%
I want to continue to be involved in the development of priority projects	63%
I will recommend the CFS process to other communities	57%
Our coalition worked well together	50%
I feel confident about how the process will move forward to reach our goals	43%

Coalition Development

The CFS process offers strategic planning and technical assistance. Throughout the first phase, coalition members determine vision, mission and core values. Grow Pleasant Hill Coalition determined the following:

Mission:

To develop a unique, inter-connected regional community that cultivates health through innovation and thriving economy.

Vision:

Grow Pleasant Hill is fostering a unique and creative suburb, promoting quality of life by:

- Partnering with our neighbors;
- Creating a space for food businesses to thrive;
- Offering creative opportunities for everyone to access healthy foods;
- Promoting wellness in education and project collaboration.

Core Values:

Collaboration and Partnership: community through relationships based on passion, expertise and skills critical to the development and sustainability for our regional transformation.

Inclusion: access to community food system components, regardless of income, race, gender, location; and encouraging under-represented people to be leaders in decision-making processes.

Awareness: education and learning opportunities about health, wellness and food systems to embolden all people to advocate and implement priorities.

Innovation and Creativity: creative and dynamic opportunities through innovative strategies that will enhance overall quality of life to live and play.

Economic Development: a suburb of choice; attracting residential development and promoting opportunities for businesses related to health and food sectors.

The CFS process occurred in Pleasant Hill between May 2016-May 2019, with reports wrapping up through spring 2020. The collective goals of the coalition and members are shown to shift based on the comments shared in both the helpfulness and improvement categories of the process. For example, seeking more community partners, while needed, was difficult throughout the process due to lack of time from organizations, or priorities in the food system; similarly, traditional agriculture was not an original value and focus of the collective vision of the coalition, however, in future, could be pursued.

Survey participants were additionally asked to rate their agreement with the following statements about the development and management of the coalition:

Statements	Aggregated %
I felt comfortable voicing my thoughts and opinions at coalition meetings	86%
Non-coalition members felt comfortable working with the coalition	86%
A hopeful attitude was present on the coalition	71%
I would like to see networking continue	71%
I understood my role in the coalition	57%
Coalition members tried new ways of doing things	57%
Coalition members were generally not interested in protecting their "turf"	43%
Non-coalition members felt comfortable working with priority project teams	43%
Coalition members understood their role in the coalition	29%

When asked ***"what was the most helpful piece of the Community Food Systems process?"*** respondents indicated the CFS process connected them further to their community. One respondent stated the process "helped me become more involved in our community and have a better understanding of resources available;" while another commented that, "Learning about the CFS process and opportunities to our community and citizens" as the most helpful piece. Another respondent claimed, "The facilitator was tireless in [their] support of a few people in the community who didn't have the energy or resources to implement the potential projects."

When asked ***"how could the Community Food Systems process be improved?"***, one respondent discussed external factors related to the development of the coalition, stating that "more involvement from community partners" was needed and "find more people and energy in the community to work on the process." Others commented on how they would like to see the process be more inclusive to all agricultural types, "I felt like traditional agriculture was dismissed . . . I would like to continue to support this group, but I think that it needs to be more open minded about all agriculture." One respondent shared they would "love to see more education tied into the program" while another indicated they would like to see "stronger interaction opportunities."

Project Teams

The following table reveals the individual priority project team results, including the number of participants in each team. In parenthesis are the total number of project team members vs. the number that participated in the survey.

	Workforce Development	Agrihood	Food Center	Farmers Market Expansion	Promotion and Education
# of team members	3 (7)	4 (9)	3 (3)	2 (5)	4 (4)
Our team worked effectively together	60%	70%	47%	80%	80%
Our team should continue efforts on building awareness about Grow Pleasant Hill values	70%	65%	70%	60%	70%
Our team completed the work it needed to do	67%	60%	45%	50%	60%

Community Impact

Participants were asked to rate their agreement with the following statements on impact the CFS process had on the community:

Statements	Aggregated %
Think creatively about potential projects to build a community food system	86%
Develop a new understanding of our capacity to work together to build a strong food system	71%
Develop new partnerships within the community around food systems development	71%
Work more effectively together through shared resources, strategies, tools, and practices	71%
Develop a new understanding of the local partners working to build a strong food system	63%
Carve out a new or stronger role in supporting community food systems	63%
Take on new leadership responsibilities in community food systems work	57%
Leverage new human resources to do community food systems work	50%
Improve our community's credibility in food systems work	45%
Change attitudes of individuals or groups on how organizations, agencies, and institutions affect food systems	25%
Leverage new financial resources to do community food systems work	14%

Individual Impact

Participants were asked to select the impacts the CFS process had on them and their family (if applicable). The following table details the total number of survey respondents for each impact:

Impacts	Total Percentages
Shop more frequently at local food venues	6
Eat more fruits and vegetables	3
Have a healthier lifestyle	3
Start volunteering with a program	2
Take on new leadership goals	2
Subscribe to a CSA	1

Conclusion

An overarching theme of this survey was a hopeful attitude toward the future of community food systems development within the Pleasant Hill community. Coalition members claimed they felt included in the CFS process, their individual project work and that this process allowed them to become more involved in their community regarding food systems initiatives. The majority of survey respondents declared that after participating in the CFS process, they shop more frequently at local food venues. It was also indicated through this survey that there is an enhanced ability to think creatively around food systems projects and that there is strong capacity to support community food systems development through new partnerships and shared resources. Most respondents, regardless of team, revealed they believe efforts on building awareness of Grow Pleasant Hill values should continue.

