

Local/Sustainable Food Recommendations

This is a brief summary of some of the recommendations that were created around the area of local and sustainable food. These recommendations are a part of a twenty-seven page policy report on sustainability the Youth Commission created for the Board of County Commissioners as an assignment they gave us. This summary of our recommendations was created for you, the reader, to review and understand the recommendation around an area that you might be interested in. You can also obtain the full copy of the report by calling Elizabeth Hill at her extension 5133. Having the full report on hand can give you a fuller explanation of our reasoning and process for each recommendation.

Promote local businesses that use local/sustainable food and products.

- There are many benefits with using locally grown foods. They don't have to travel as far to the market. They are more natural and fresh the less they have to travel. Usually the fruits and vegetables that have to travel great distances are coated with beeswax, resin or even petroleum. Burgerville is one of the best chains in the northwest to take advantage of locally grown foods and use them in their menus.

Encourage local agriculture and community gardens.

- We would like to see more community gardens available all over the county instead of a few areas. "Come and Plant" would be the slogan. We understand that you are in the process of doing this but we would like to see it continued.

Replace grass by county buildings with indigenous plants.

- This is a unique and interesting idea that the Youth Commission came up with. Lawns take a lot of care to keep it up. If you water it, it uses a lot of water. Then you need to cut it which the machinery takes gas and then you need to take in account operational costs as well. Native plants would be better than grass; more ecological, economical, easier to take care of, and aesthetically pleasing.

Have people grow their own food.

- If people could grow their own food, it would reduce the cost of living and increase community health because more healthy organic fruits and vegetables would be easily accessible to the community. A majority of families that aren't living in the upper-middle class can't always afford fresh veggies and fruit. As we all know, Top Ramen has no nutritional value, and school lunches aren't much better either. You have to be extremely poor to qualify for free lunch, and those who are stuck with reduced lunch still can't afford it sometimes. Even if they could, fruits and veggies are most often in short supply. Whoever heard of apples that are smaller than tennis balls? More often than not, the apples and oranges are small and under ripe, and don't provide all the nutrients a growing child needs. Home grown veggies would provide much needed vitamins and minerals for low income families. Fresh grown food would be immediately eaten, so they wouldn't need to be pumped full of additives and preservatives or dyes.

Get County Employees Involved

And, what if county employees even got in on the gardening? Gardening is proven to help relieve stress. If employees helped to upkeep the garden, they

could get some fresh air (much needed when your main work environment is an office or cubicle), and every time they see the garden, they can take pride in knowing they put in a helping hand to make their workplace and their county even more beautiful. Even if they don't help, just seeing the lush, green plants and being able to walk around in the gardens would brighten their day.

Provide compost options for Clark County employees at work.

- This recommendation calls for you to take some land around the buildings and have an area where food that would normally be thrown away can be taken to the compost bin. Then, over time, you can have a Clark County employee garden where, if they so choose, the employees, during paid time or green breaks as incentives to get employees involved with being sustainable can plant and grow a garden using the compost they have created. They could donate the food to the local homeless shelter or food banks. Having their own compost bin, the employees will be able to recycle what would be usually not recycled, providing a cost-effective option for disposing of waste products in a non-harmful way.