Local Food System Planning and Linn County: Slow Growing
Presentation Overview

• Why is Local Food System Planning Important?

• Agricultural Land Protection Planning v. Local Food System Planning

• Possible Roles of Local Government in Local Food System Planning

• Current & Future Efforts in Linn County
Why Is This Important?

- “Sustainability” Components
  - Economic Opportunity
  - Environmental Protection
  - Social Equity
- Positive Impacts on Communities
  - Environment
  - Health
  - Social
  - Food Security
  - Local Economy
Agricultural Land Protection Planning

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Local Food System Planning

Local Food System Planning & Linn County: Slow Growing
Relevant Code of Iowa Provisions

- Ch. 352, County Land Preservation and Use
- Ch. 414, City Zoning
- Ch. 335, County Zoning
- Exemptions from regulations for farms
  - Sec. 335.2 (exemption from zoning regulations)
  - Sec. 331.304.3.b (exemption from building code)
Agricultural Land Protection Planning

- A Response to “Modern” Agricultural Practices
  - Production Methods
    - Land-consumptive
    - Machine-intensive
    - Input-intensive
  - Access to Markets
    - Land-to-market (one way flow)
    - Storage, transportation & distribution
  - Processing
    - Industrial facilities
Agricultural Land Protection Planning

- **Methods**
  - Land Use Plans
  - Zoning Regulations
  - Land assessment/property tax structure
  - Transfer of Development Rights
  - Purchase of Development Rights

- **Evaluation Criteria**
  - Corn Suitability Rating (CSR)
  - Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) System
Local Food System Planning

• A Response to a “Different” Way to Grow
  ▪ Production Methods
    ▫ Land-intensive (diversity)
    ▫ Labor-intensive
    ▫ Sustainable inputs
  ▪ Access to Markets
    ▫ Market-to-land and land-to-market (two-way flow)
    ▫ Storage, transportation & distribution
  ▪ Processing
    ▫ Small capacity facilities
Local Food System Planning

- Methods
  - Land Use Plans
  - Zoning Regulations
  - Land assessment/property tax structure (Issue: 10-acre “threshold”?)
  - Transfer of Development Rights
  - Purchase of Development Rights
  - Fiscal Policies (e.g. Woodbury County)

- Evaluation Criteria
  - Corn Suitability Rating (CSR)
  - Land Evaluation and Sustainability Assessment (LESA) System
Possible Roles of Local Government in Local Food System Planning

Local Food System Planning & Linn County: Slow Growing
Local Food System Chain of Activities

- Production
- Processing
- Distribution
- Wholesale Sales
- Retail Sales
- Consumption
- Waste Disposal
The Role of Local Government

- Understand the Local Food System Chain of Activities
- Identify and Remove/Reduce Barriers
  - Regulatory and private (restrictive covenants)
- Identify and Provide/Enable Incentives
- Provide Balanced Regulations
  - Private Interests
  - Legitimate Public Interests
The Role of Local Government

• Institutionalize
  ◦ Policies
    ▪ Land use
    ▪ Purchasing
  ◦ Financial Support
    ▪ Staffing
    ▪ Grants
    ▪ Taxes
Potential Policy Areas

- Related to Steps in Food System Chain of Activities
  - Production
  - Processing
  - Access & Consumption
  - Waste Disposal

- Related to Functional Planning Areas
  - Environment
  - Economic Development
  - Sustainable Development
  - Health
  - Neighborhoods

- Related to Security
  - Bio-Terrorism
  - Disaster Planning & Recovery
Linn County: Current and Future Efforts

Local Food System Planning & Linn County: Slow Growing
YES, I would like to attend Planting the Seeds: Agriculture as Economic Development on June 1 and 2, 2005 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

NAME ____________________________________________

ADDRESS _______________________________________

_________________________________________________

PHONE __________________________________________

E-MAIL ____________________________________________

☐ I have enclosed the $35.00 registration fee, made payable to: Linn County Planning & Development. After May 23, the registration fee is $45.00.

Location: Wickup Hill Outdoor Learning Center
10260 Morris Hills Road
Tadmor, Iowa 52341

Questions? Contact Becki Woolson at (319) 802-5130.
Linn County: Slow Growing

- Planting the Seeds: Agriculture as Economic Development in Iowa (June 2005)
- Unified Development Code (2006)
  - Farm Stands
  - Temporary Uses
    - Haunted trails
    - Crop maze
    - Live nativity scene
  - Farm Winery
Linn County: Slow Growing

- Local Food Regional Coalition (2007)
- Identify Local Producers (2008)
- Buy Fresh Buy Local Linn County Chapter (current)
- Rural Land Use Plan Update (current)
  - Local Food System Policies, Goals, & Objectives
- Partnership with Iowa Valley RC&D (current)
  - Linn County Local Food System Strategic Plan
  - Local Food Project Associate
Linn County: Slow Growing

- Local Food Incubator Park (future)
  - Production Component
  - Business Incubator Component
  - Processing & Storage Component
  - Transportation and Distribution Component
  - Consumer Component
    - Farm stands/markets
    - Restaurants
    - Festivals/events
  - Environmental Component
    - Waste-to-resource
  - Housing Component
Conclusions

- Local food is an important issue for many reasons
- Local government has a valid role to play in supporting the local food chain of activities
- Much of the current “state of planning” for local foods is geared toward urban agriculture
- The tools Iowa counties will use in supporting the local food chain of activities is in its infancy
- Exemptions for farms, specifically farm houses, will be (even more) problematic