

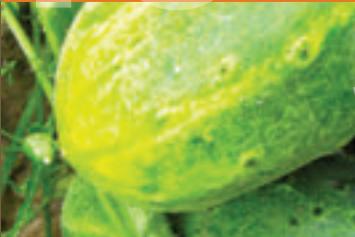


LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE

2017 annual report



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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE

It is with great pride that I present to you the 2017 Local Food Initiative Annual Report. Since I launched the Initiative in 2014, notable achievements by farmers, non-profit organizations, farm and food businesses, and public agencies have moved us toward our goal of building a stronger, more resilient local food economy that offers nutritious and affordable food to all our residents.

This report highlights a number of significant accomplishments in 2017, including:

- Continued growth and expansion of nutrition incentive programs like Fresh Bucks that make healthy food more affordable for low-income communities;
- The launch of a new multi-partner collaborative that will connect farmland owners with farmers looking to establish or expand their businesses;
- New community investments in farmers markets, farm stands, and produce delivery to support urban agriculture, promote healthy living, and engage communities;
- Completion of a landmark “Fish Farm Flood” agreement to address the potentially competing objectives of agriculture, salmon recovery, and flood safety in the Snoqualmie River Valley; and
- Formation of a new strategic partnership between farming training organizations - the Beginning Farmer Support Collaborative - that will improve delivery of services and support to new and beginning farmers across King County.

When we launched the Local Food Initiative we knew that it would take sustained, long-term effort to reform our food system so that it better reflects the values of our community and serves the needs of local farmers, low-income communities, consumers, and food businesses. We celebrate our progress in this report, and recognize that there is still a long way to go to fully meet our goals.

I want to thank the Kitchen Cabinet and food system stakeholders across the county for your continued support. Through partnership, innovation, and investment we can continue build a more sustainable and equitable food system.

Dow Constantine

Dow Constantine, King County Executive

2017 LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE INDICATORS

IMPROVING ACCESS TO FARMLAND



39,707 total acres in agricultural production

172 acres returned to production in 2017

58 acres restored through ADAP in 2017

282 acres placed under FPP in 2017

15,293 total acres in FPP

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING FOR FARMERS AND FOOD BUSINESSES



7,666 unique visitors (page views) to Farm King County website

30 of farmers participating in WSU Cultivating Success classes

210 number participating in WSU Extension workshops in 2017

ENHANCING SCHOOL NUTRITION ENVIRONMENTS



45 in-home childcare providers participated in *Let's Move* curriculum training about healthier meal practices

335 children received healthier foods as a result of the *Let's Move* curriculum

INCREASING THE AFFORDABILITY OF HEALTHY FOOD THROUGH NUTRITION INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

31 farmers markets and farm stands accept Fresh Bucks



36% FROM 2016

\$221,215 of Fresh Bucks were used at farmers markets in King County in 2017

4,920 individuals participated in the program in 2017

\$36,728 of Fresh Bucks Retail redeemed at small ethnic grocers in 2017,

\$113,740 of Complete Eats redeemed at Safeway stores

ENHANCING ACCESS TO DIRECT MARKET OUTLETS FOR PRIORITY COMMUNITIES



2,745 families participated in food access projects in King County

20,184 bags of local produce delivered

2017 LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE INDICATORS

INCREASING THE AVAILABILITY OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES AT FOOD BANKS

2.2 million individual visits to King County food banks	1 million households served by King County food banks	42 million pounds of food distributed or the equivalent of 35 million meals in 2017	129,424 pounds of food donated by King County farmers markets
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GROWING NEW FARMERS

39 aspiring farmers participated in farmer training programs	22 new aspiring farmers joined training programs in 2017	8 farmers graduated/left training programs to start their own farms	30 acres under production by farmer training programs
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IMPROVING ACCESS TO IRRIGATION

6 farms receiving irrigation water from the Snoqualmie Valley WID in 2017

GROWING MARKETS FOR LOCAL PRODUCTS

\$17,261,922 total farm sales at King County farmers markets	\$27,209,947 total vendor sales at King County farmers markets
64 King County farms selling at farmers markets	243 total number of farmers selling at farmers markets in King County

REDUCING FOOD WASTE

8,000 public contacts made through Food: Too Good To Waste community outreach in English and Spanish

100 tons of food waste diverted from disposal at the landfill by composting or food rescue through SWD commercial food waste grants.

**KEY STRATEGY:
IMPROVING ACCESS TO FARMLAND**

Access to affordable land for long term-lease or purchase remains a significant barrier for farmers across King County, both in the rural and urban context. Rising land prices continue to make it challenging for new farmers to acquire land and for veteran farmers to expand their operations. High land values also make it extremely difficult for farmers to establish an economically sustainable farming business model. Despite the challenges, progress was made in 2017 that will help to put more farmers on more land in the future.

Farmland Protection Program (FPP)

One key tool at the County’s disposal is to acquire Farmland Preservation Easements, which remove some or all of the development rights from the property and restrict activities that limit the farming potential. By selling a FPP easement to the County, landowners can access much-needed capital for farmland improvements and the residual land value is reduced, which can improve land access opportunities for subsequent generations of farmers. In 2017:

- Eight landowners agreed to sell FPP easements protecting a total of 282 acres, exceeding the annual goal of 200 acres. There are now nearly 15,300 acres of permanently protected farmland in King County.
- A new FPP easement goal of 475 acres annually was established, reflecting the need to accelerate farmland protection if the



targets under the Land Conservation Initiative are to be met. King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (KC DNRP) will refocus staff and financial resources in an effort to meet the ambitious new goal.

ADAP Program

King County’s Agricultural Drainage Assistance Program helps agricultural property owners improve drainage of their agricultural lands by providing both technical and financial assistance.

In 2017, a program record of 14,500 feet of agricultural drainage waterways were enhanced or maintained. That drainage improvement work restored 58 acres of formerly idle farmland back to production and enhanced agricultural potential on an additional 328 acres.



King Conservation District-funded projects are identified throughout this report with the image to the left.

2017 LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE INDICATOR



Agricultural Land Use Survey

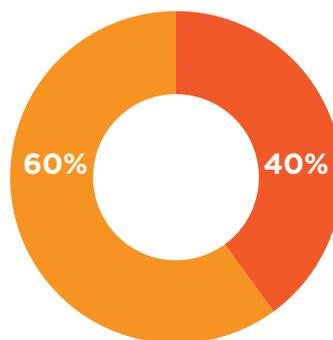
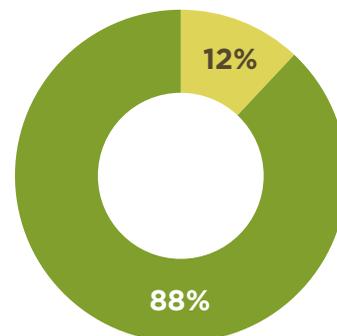
A comprehensive agricultural land use survey was completed in 2017 and found that 39,700 acres were actively farmed, of which 23,900 were farmed for food production. The acreage in food production was an increase of approximately 1,900 acres from a similar 2013 survey. Although the majority of the farmed land was within Agricultural Production Districts (APDs), nearly a quarter of the food-producing acreage was located in rural zoned portions of the county. While lands within APDs are afforded significant protection from development to non-agricultural uses, rural areas do not have the same level of protection; thus, the potential loss of land farmed for food production is great.



KC Land Use Survey Results: Farmland Within and Outside APDs

Farmed: 39,709 acres

Farmable: 5,543 acres



Food Production: 23,919 acres

Non-food Production: 15,790 acres



Working Farmland Partnership - Connecting Landowners with Farmers

King County and its partners launched a collaborative effort to connect farmland owners with farmers looking to establish or expand their farming business. One of the key objectives of the Working Farmland Partnership (WFP) is to strategically focus resources on bringing idle farmland back into production to meet the 4,000 net new acres goal. The 2017 agricultural land use survey identified over 5,500 acres of “farmable but unfarmed” land; we intend to communicate with the owners of those lands to determine whether the WFP team can help return some of those lands to active food production.

Urban Farmland Access

Urban farming can provide residents access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food; cut down on transportation costs and carbon emissions; empower and revitalize communities; and allow farmers to grow culturally appropriate foods that meet a wide variety of communities' needs. Securing the long-term use of land for urban farming, however, can be a significant barrier. In 2017, two exciting community agriculture projects were launched that will address this need in South King County.

Hillside Paradise Parking Plots Community Garden

Many of the over 1,100 refugees resettled each year by World Relief Seattle (WRS), as well as the diverse community of immigrants in Kent, have agrarian backgrounds. However, living in apartments in a relatively dense urban environment offers little connection to the soil and a chance to grow food.

The Hillside Paradise Parking Plots Community Garden in Kent aims to address the need for greater access to healthy food for refugee communities. The project has transformed an underutilized parking lot into a 50-plot garden and educational space for refugees and immigrants to gather and grow culturally appropriate foods to promote a healthier lifestyle and build community. The project was developed by WRS, in partnership with Construction for Change, King County Water Works, The Nature Conservancy and Kent Hillside Church.



Community Garden at St. Columba's Episcopal Church

Forterra and the International Rescue Committee worked with immigrant, refugee and low-income community members to develop a community garden at St. Columba's Episcopal Church in Kent. This $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre site provides garden plots for 35 families to grow healthy, culturally appropriate foods and features a fruit tree orchard for shared gleaning. The International Rescue Committee's New Roots Program will manage the garden and provide continued opportunities for gardeners, particularly refugees new to growing food in the Pacific Northwest, to gain experience and training about farming in King County's climate.

**KEY STRATEGY:
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING FOR FARMERS AND FOOD BUSINESSES**

Farmers, ranchers, landowners, and food businesses often benefit from training and technical support that can assist with farm production, land management, permitting issues, and business development. Organizations across the County contribute to this training and support through one-on-one technical assistance, focused workshops and other support services.

Farm King County

FarmKingCounty.org is considered the primary source for information about agricultural business planning and financing, farmland access, production, marketing and food safety in King County. In addition to providing a “one-stop-shop” platform, FarmKingCounty.org is continually updated with current events, training opportunities, etc. In 2017, nearly 7,666 unique individuals visited the website.

A Farm King County Technical Team has been formed to discuss opportunities to collaborate and share resources and to identify gaps in the services offered to ensure that farmers and farmland owners have access to the resources they need.

Landowner and Farmer Assistance

King County hired a regulatory and permitting specialist to assist agricultural landowners in navigating complex permitting issues. Over 40 landowners and farm operators received assistance in 2017.

**King Conservation District (KCD)
Farm Services Program**

KCD provided natural resource planning services to 249 farming customers. Their staff conducted nearly 200 farm site visits, created 56 farm conservation plans and provided cost-share support to 42 farmers who agreed to implement some of the conservation actions identified in the plans.

King County’s agriculture staff interacted with farmers and farmland owners over 1,000 times in 2017. Those interactions ranged from farm permitting concerns, livestock ordinance issues, marketing challenges and issues related to enrollment in one of the county’s Current Use Taxation programs.

Fish Farm Flood

Over a three year period, landowners, agencies, tribes, cities and natural resource organizations worked to develop a suite of strategies that would address the potentially competing objectives of agriculture, salmon recovery and flood safety in the Snoqualmie River Valley. The planning phase of this effort, termed “Fish Farm Flood,” was completed in June 2017 and over 40 near-term actions were identified. Although the majority of those actions will be launched in 2018, many were initiated in 2017, including the hiring of an agricultural regulatory and permitting specialist, who can help farmers and agricultural landowners navigate the challenging regulatory landscape.

2017 LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE INDICATOR

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING FOR FARMERS AND FOOD BUSINESSES

7,666 unique visitors (page views) to Farm King County website	30 of farmers participating in WSU Cultivating Success classes	210 number participating in WSU Extension workshops in 2017
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WSU Extension - Cultivating Success

Washington State University Extension continued its popular Cultivating Success programs for farmers and ranchers in King County. In 2017, WSU Extension offered two components of the program: Sustainable Small-Acreage Farming and Ranching, which is the beginning series in the program, and Agricultural Entrepreneurship, which guides farmers and ranchers through the business planning process.

WSU Extension offered seven workshops in King County in 2017. Classes ranged in topics from soils to pollinators to tractor safety to dealing with beavers. 210 people participated in the workshops.

Equipment Sharing

King Conservation District expanded their Farm Equipment Loan Program in 2017, allowing 58 individuals to borrow specialized equipment, such as manure spreaders, that helped to enhance farm production potential.



Crop Planning Tools for Farmers

Northwest Agriculture Business Center led a process to create a comprehensive crop forecasting, planning, and mapping tool and user guide for row crop vegetable farmers. The tool will assist farmers in planning exactly what and how much of everything to grow, when and how often to start (greenhouse), sow, or transplant any given crop, and where every single planting and sowing will go in a mapped field.



KEY STRATEGY: WORKING WITH LOCAL JURISDICTIONS TO DEVELOP BETTER FOOD SYSTEM POLICIES, PRACTICES AND INCENTIVES



City and county policies play a role in how our local food system functions. These include land use plans, policies around food procurement, regulations on farm stands and urban farming, and many others. Jurisdictions and communities are working to develop policies and practices that support the food economy and improve access to healthy foods.

Restaurant and Food Safety

- King County rolled out a new food safety rating system that was designed to advance food safety, clarity for users, and equity for food businesses.
- Public Health – Seattle & King County staff compiled findings from parent focus groups and 10 restaurant interviews, produced a video highlighting parents’ experiences, and developed a workshop to build skills in creating healthier restaurant environments for children. City staff and community members from Kent, Auburn and Tukwila attended the workshop.

Seattle's Sweetened Beverage Tax

In June 2017, Seattle City Council passed a tax on the distribution of sugar-sweetened beverages in the city of Seattle. Research has shown that sugary drinks can lead to Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke, weight gain and tooth decay. Taxing sugary drinks reduces their sales and consumption. It will also raise tax revenue from sales on sugar-sweetened beverages to help improve access to healthy food and fund programs aimed at reducing educational disparities facing communities of color.

The sweetened beverage tax went into effect on January 1, 2018 and the City anticipates the tax will generate \$14.8 million in 2018. Money raised from the tax will support a range of programs in healthy food access (\$3.8 million); early learning (\$3.25 million); education (\$2.57 million); administration, job training for workers adversely impacted by the tax, and evaluation (\$2.43 million, including \$1.2 million for one-time costs needed to set up the tax collection system); and a fund reserved for the Community Advisory Board's recommendations (\$2.77 million).

Funding from the beverage tax is supporting the expansion of several healthy food access programs directly connected with the strategies of the Local Food Initiative, including:

- **Fresh Bucks Program (\$2.1 million):** Funds will increase the number of locations where participants can use the Fresh Bucks produce incentives, expand program eligibility to residents who do not qualify for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits but remain food insecure ("food security gap"), increase community-based outreach and promotion efforts, and increase the availability of Fresh Bucks Fruit and Vegetable Prescriptions.



- **Farm to Table Program (\$424,000):** Provides nutrition education and food stipends to Seattle preschool program sites, home-based child care, and community-based locations so providers can serve more fruits and vegetables to children in their care. Funds will expand program delivery to an additional 1,050 children, from 1,800 children served in 2017.
- **Fresh Bucks to Go Program (\$551,000):** Distributes free or low-cost fresh bags of local fruits or vegetables every other week at preschool programs serving low-income families. Funds will extend programming year-round and expand service from 700 to 1,400 participants.
- **Out-of-School Time Nutrition Program (\$195,000):** Funds will consolidate and expand the Summer Food Service Program and the Afterschool Meals Program into one year-round "Out-of-School Time Nutrition Program," increasing food access to vulnerable children and youth ages 1 to 18, when not in school. Funds will also improve meal quality by adding a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Additional healthy food access investments are expected after the Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board develops its recommendations for how to spend \$2.77 million held in reserve. These recommendations are anticipated to be released by the summer.

KEY STRATEGY: IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHY AFFORDABLE FOOD

Enhancing Schools Nutrition Environments

Most children in King County spend the majority of their day in either a school or a childcare setting. Assuring that schools and childcare facilities have healthy food environments and practices are important steps to increasing children’s access to healthy foods and beverages, as well as building and supporting positive eating behaviors.

- Child Care Resources, Horn of Africa Services, and City of Seattle-Human Services Department trained family home childcare providers in the Let’s Move curriculum to support healthy eating practices. This concludes their three-year training project.
- Through a Best Starts for Kids grant, Vashon Youth and Family Services has established a Learning Network between 15 childcare providers who serve over 300 children to increase healthy eating practices. The Learning Network partnered with Vashon Island Growers Association and local chefs to provide food demonstrations on how to incorporate healthy meals into childcare programs.
- FEEST (Food Empowerment Education and Sustainability Team) worked with Highline School District Nutrition Services Director to establish a Youth Advisory Committee consisting of six youth from Evergreen High School. This adds a youth voice to district-wide menu planning, marketing and nutrition



policies, and has resulted in the inclusion of culturally-relevant school lunch items such as “Butternut Squash Curry” and “Malaysian Pickles.”

- Public Health – Seattle & King County reinvigorated a Learning Network of school nutrition directors to share best practices and create new resources to increase the number of students eating school meals. They worked with Washington State Department of Agriculture to discuss local food procurement and updated Harvest of the Month materials for elementary schools.

2017 LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE INDICATOR



IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHY AFFORDABLE FOOD: Enhancing School Nutrition Environments



45 in-home childcare providers participated in *Let’s Move* curriculum training about healthier meal practices

335 children received healthier foods as a result of the *Let’s Move* curriculum

The Future of Fresh Bucks

The Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant that provides a significant amount of funding for Fresh Bucks, and the Complete Eats program will expire at the end of 2019. Seattle's Sweetened Beverage Tax will provide funding to Fresh Bucks within the city after FINI. Partners are exploring ways to sustain the program throughout King County after the FINI grant expires.

Additionally, with the increased funding from Seattle's Sweetened Beverage Tax, Fresh Bucks is eliminating the \$10 per market-day cap. Going forward, Fresh Bucks will double all of a participants' SNAP withdrawals at participating farmers markets, farm stands, and retailers. This will significantly increase the power of the incentive for people experiencing food insecurity. Piloting this change at the year-round farmers markets in late 2017 saw the average SNAP withdrawal go from \$9.48 to \$19.71.



Increasing the Affordability of Healthy Food Through Nutrition Incentive Programs

As the costs of housing and basic needs continue to rise in King County, many families struggle to afford healthy, local food. King County continues to support incentive programs to assist people who are food insecure acquire the healthy produce they both want and need. The City of Seattle's Fresh Bucks Program matches SNAP benefits dollar-for-dollar for fruits and vegetables at farmers markets, farm stands, and now several small ethnic grocers. It also continued to expand its access by adding new farmers markets and ethnic grocers accepting Fresh Bucks, as well as new health clinics distributing Fruit and Vegetable Prescriptions. Additionally, Safeway launched Complete Eats, a fruit and vegetable incentive program for people using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) benefits.

Fresh Bucks Expansion

- Markets added: Auburn Farmers Market and Bellevue Farmers Markets
- Fresh Bucks Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program: Program operated at five health clinics, 497 families participated, receiving a total of \$70,308 in additional Fresh Bucks.
- Fresh Bucks retail: Six ethnic grocers started accepting Fresh Bucks for fruit and vegetable purchases. SNAP customers at these grocers redeemed \$36,728 in additional Fresh Bucks.

Complete Eats

Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and Safeway launched Complete Eats Fruit and Vegetable Coupons in all Safeway stores across the state (52 stores in King County). SNAP customers who spent at least \$10 on fruits and vegetables using their SNAP food benefits received an additional \$5 coupon for fruits and vegetables. Complete Eats is supported by DOH's Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

2017 LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE INDICATOR

IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHY AFFORDABLE FOOD: Increasing the Affordability of Healthy Food Through Nutrition Incentive Programs

31 farmers markets and farm stands accept Fresh Bucks

4,920 individuals participated in the program

\$221,215 of Fresh Bucks were used at farmers markets

\$113,740 of Complete Eats redeemed at Safeway

\$36,728 of Fresh Bucks Retail redeemed at small ethnic grocers

36%
FROM 2016



Enhancing Access to Direct Market Outlets for Priority Communities

Direct market outlets can increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables for low income and ethnic communities. Many programs use outside subsidies or incentives to offer local produce at a cost below market rate, increasing the affordability of healthy produce. Some direct market strategies incorporate activities and community building events such as taste tests, cooking demos and nutrition talks to build knowledge and support community wide culture change around healthy eating.

Market Innovations

- The City of Seattle piloted the expansion of the Fresh Bucks to Go Program in their Seattle Preschool Program and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program sites. Participants in the preschool program could receive a free bi-weekly bag of produce with their enrollment. A total of 9,297 bags were distributed to 962 people (an estimated value of \$140,000 of local produce). This program will expand with funding from the Seattle Sweetened Beverage Tax.
- SnoValley Tilth and the Carnation Farmers Market launched a Power of Produce program to support SNAP eligible and food insecure families in the SnoValley area to access the Carnation Farmers Market. Tolt River Family Medicine provides a \$10 Veggie Rx to food insecure families and the market provides children with an additional \$2 in tokens to purchase produce of interest to them.



“ I wanted to take a moment to thank you and your organization. [Fresh Bucks to Go] is expanding the whole family’s diet. We received a bag containing, along with other things, fennel. Thanks to your recipe card we were able to use the entire vegetable and discovered everyone likes roasted fennel bulb. Not being familiar with fennel myself, I would never have thought to get one and try it. Thanks you for expanding our horizons. Now my son and I are excited to get the next bag and see what it inside. It has turned into a fun game with healthy treats.”

- Seattle Preschool Program parent



2017 LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE INDICATOR

IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHY AFFORDABLE FOOD: Enhancing Access to Direct Market Outlets for Priority Communities



2,745 families participated in food access projects in King County

20,184 bags of local produce delivered

New Markets

- Living Well Kent launched the Kent East Hill Food Bazaar, a monthly market at Morrill Meadows Park for community members to find local produce and culturally-appropriate produce that is hard to find by immigrant communities. A total of 485 people visited the market during their first five market days of 2017.
- The Food Innovation Network launched a farm stand at SeaTac’s Matt Griffin YMCA. In an area devoid of grocery stores, this weekly farm stand created an important opportunity to buy produce from local farms.
- Local farm, 21 Acres, piloted two new mobile farm stands (in Shoreline for six weeks and in northeast Seattle for seven weeks) to increase access to affordable local produce. The stands accepted SNAP benefits and doubled SNAP up to \$10. These two stands served over 300 people selling \$3,100 of locally grown produce.

Increasing the Availability of Fruit and Vegetables at Food Banks

Food banks and meal programs provide a significant portion of food to low-income and food insecure individuals. These programs rely on limited budgets for purchasing and receive a large percentage of food via donations, much of which is canned and packaged foods or with a limited shelf life. Research indicates an association between food insecurity and poor diets. This strategy aims to increase the healthy options available through these outlets for our most vulnerable community members.

Food Lifeline launched a healthcare initiative in collaboration with Sea Mar Community Health Center. Twice a month, patients with diabetes who are also experiencing food insecurity fill up bags with fresh fruits and vegetables from a mobile food bank at Sea Mar’s Burien clinic. Over 200 patients used the pilot during the first six months, with 69 percent of the participants saying that the food greatly improved their ability to eat more fruits and vegetables.

Follow Up on Elk Run Farm

Elk Run Farm grows fresh fruits and vegetables for food banks in the South King County Food Coalition. The first full growing season in 2017 resulted in a total of 2,916 pounds of produce, including 35 different types of fruits, vegetables and herbs. These harvests were donated to nine different food banks all across South King County. Those pounds translate to a market value of \$11,495 and 16,327 estimated servings of fruits and vegetables.



2017 LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE INDICATOR

IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHY AFFORDABLE FOOD: Increasing the Availability of Fruit and Vegetables at Food Banks



2.2 million individual visits to King County food banks

1 million households served by King County food banks

42 million pounds of food distributed or the equivalent of 35 million meals

129,424 pounds of food donated by King County farmers markets

**KEY STRATEGY:
GROWING NEW FARMERS**

The average age of a King County farmer is 57 years old. This means that a significant portion of farmland will change hands in the next several decades. However, there is a shortage of new and beginning farmers due to multiple issues including lack of access to capital, land, and training. Developing new farmers that have the technical and business skills to succeed is critical if we are going to grow our local food economy.

Beginning Farmer Support Collaborative

Three King County farmer training programs - Tilth Alliance, SnoValley Tilth and VIVA Farms - have partnered to form the Beginning Farmer Support Collective. The project, which is funded by a three-year USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program Grant, will strengthen new farmer training through the sharing of best practices and technical assistance, and improved coordination and support for land access assistance.



SAGE and VIVA Collaborate to Grow Farmer Incubator Opportunities

In 2017, the SAGE Farm in Sammamish Valley became a program of Viva Farms making it the only multi-county (and the largest) non-profit, farm business incubator program in Washington. The new Viva Farms King County Student Farm & Farm Incubator is a 10-acre agricultural campus that provides a training facility at which students attain practical “seed-to-sales” experience and new farmers launch businesses.

Viva Farms was founded in Skagit County in 2009, and since then has educated over 700 small farmers (100+ Spanish speakers) in sustainable organic farming and is currently incubating 24 independent farm businesses (Eight Latino owned). By providing bilingual training in sustainable organic farming, and access to land, infrastructure, equipment, marketing and capital, Viva Farms helps new farmers become healthy and economically viable farmers that nourish and sustain our farmland and agricultural industry.

2017 LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE INDICATOR

GROWING NEW FARMERS

39 aspiring farmers participated in farmer training programs

22 new aspiring farmers joined training programs in 2017

8 farmers graduated/left training programs to start their own farms

30 acres under production by farmer training programs



KEY STRATEGY: ENGAGING COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT HEALTHY EATING AND IMPROVE THE FOOD SYSTEM

Community leadership and involvement are critical to successful efforts to improving access to healthy affordable food. King County's community members and community organizations are coming together and are working hard to have an active voice in developing and implementing strategies that can result in lasting impactful improvements. These new coalitions and their efforts support our food system, provide greater understanding of how our food system affects individual lives, and develop creative ways to address our area's challenges.

Community Coalitions

- The Food Innovation Network and Forterra convened community organizations, government agencies and other stakeholders interested in urban and community agriculture in the newly formed South King Urban Agriculture Network (SKUAN). SKUAN identified key barriers and opportunities for expanding urban agriculture opportunities in South King County, and provides a venue for sharing resources and developing a coordinated work plan for projects.
- Living Well Kent, through the support of Best Starts for Kids, has worked to develop a Youth Policy Council within the Kent Food Policy Council. Youth participated in food systems and policy trainings that will eventually transfer to direct experience in organizing around a policy issue.



- Got Green and the Sugary Beverage Tax Coalition organized a campaign to support the City of Seattle Sweetened Beverage Tax so that funding would support healthy eating programs. The Sweetened Beverage Tax ordinance passed and specified that “expanding access to healthy and affordable food, closing the food security gap, and promoting health food choices” is the top priority for how tax revenue should be used.

Public Engagement

King County hosted its third-annual CHOMP! festival. This free event celebrates local food and farmers by providing hands-on fun educational experiences plus chef demonstrations, competitions, and musical entertainment. By enhancing the activity and stage programming in 2017, the event attracted more than 5,000 people who were able to connect with local farmers and organizations to learn about our local food system.

KCD Community Agriculture Program

In 2017, KCD made a conscious shift to focus resources within urban agriculture toward community gardens.

SOIL TESTING & FERTILITY:

KCD provided results for 1,428 soil tests in 2017. KCD also made cover crop seed available to nine community gardens in Fall 2017 as part of a pilot program to encourage gardeners to consider cover crop as a soil amendment.

HÜGELKULTUR: KCD promoted Hügelkultur awareness as a means to build soil and re-use green waste. Over a dozen hügel mounds were built that are being used to grow food and ornamentals.

COMPOST: In partnership with King County's WTD, KCD allocated 100 yards of GroCo compost to community parks and gardens.

GARDEN ASSISTANCE: KCD identified viable community garden sites and marketing and grant funding support to communities.

**KEY STRATEGY:
IMPROVING ACCESS TO IRRIGATION**

Many farms in King County lack legal access to irrigation water and dryland farming is becoming increasingly challenging due to climate change. With increased access to irrigation water there is significant potential to increase food production. To date most efforts to increase access to water have occurred in the Snoqualmie and Sammamish river valleys.

Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District (WID)

- The WID launched Washington state’s first agricultural water bank to ensure access to irrigation for all Snoqualmie Valley farmers. In 2017, six farmers “bought” water and 34 acre feet of water were leased.
- A comprehensive analysis of the drainage network was conducted that divided the WID boundaries into planning units, and prioritized those units to guide drainage investments.
- Working with the Snoqualmie Tribe, the WID identified a need for modernized fish screens, and designed a program to get them in the field to protect fish.

Sammamish Valley Agricultural Production District

- Using a tank, trailer and irrigation equipment that were purchase by the King County Recycled Water Program, recycled water for irrigation was delivered to farmers at the County-owned Sammamish River Farm.
- Recycled water was also used for cut flower storage on the Sammamish River Farm.



2017 LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE INDICATOR

IMPROVING ACCESS TO IRRIGATION

6 farms receiving irrigation water from the Snoqualmie Valley WID in 2017



KEY STRATEGY: GROWING MARKETS FOR LOCAL PRODUCTS

Increasing the demand for local products across existing and new market channels is essential to improving the long term viability of our farm economy. Direct market channels like farmers markets, CSAs and restaurants require continued support and nurturing as core foundations of our local farm economy. At the same time new institutional markets with schools, hospitals, and daycares offer promise with the right supply chain support. The development of value added products and new tools to connect producers with consumers are also helping to expand the market for local farm products.

Farmers Market and CSA Promotion: Farm Fresh Local

A multi-faceted farmer’s market promotion campaign by King County was completed in 2017. The USDA-supported Farm Fresh Local project sought to raise awareness among King County employees, the general public and other large employers about where and how to access local food and farmers markets in King County.

■ The Farm Fresh Local project included a robust Regional Farmers Market Promotion Campaign that featured digital, radio, print and Metro bus ads that promoted farmers markets across King County. The campaign ran for approximately six weeks, from July 1 to August 15.

■ The Farm Fresh Local campaign included significant efforts to engage and encourage King County employees to visit local farmers markets and participate in CSAs. The County’s CSA@Work program continued to grow and now operates at 12 County worksites.

- A story map, *Explore Farm Fresh Food – Eat Like a Local in and around King County*, was developed that provides a virtual tour of farm fresh food in King County.
- A *local food blog* was launched to share stories from a diverse range of stakeholders about how and why to engage with local food.
- To facilitate the expansion of the Farm Fresh Local program to other organizations, a new *Community Supported Agriculture Guidebook* was produced that offers tips and recommendations that the County learned in developing its CSA program.



2017 LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE INDICATOR



GROWING MARKETS FOR LOCAL PRODUCTS

\$17,261,922 total farm sales at King County farmers markets

64 King County farms selling at farmers markets

\$27,209,947 total vendor sales at King County farmers markets

243 total number of farmers selling at farmers markets





SnoValley Farmers Co-op Value-Added Product Pilot Project

There is very little processed product in the marketplace made from crops grown in the Snoqualmie Valley. In 2017, SnoValley Farmers Co-op (SVFC) undertook a pilot project to develop a local processed product from field-to-grocery store shelf. The purpose of the project was to assess the viability of the processed product market by identifying and finding real-life solutions to the barriers that often prevent farmers from accessing this market. SVFC successfully developed two products, a slaw mix and a braising mix, which was distributed by Key City Fish and sold at Central Co-op.

New Markets for Vashon Farmers

Vashon Fresh is an online marketplace for locally grown food that enables



Vashon-Maury Island residents to buy local, sustainably grown food from 27 farms and local food vendors directly from their computer or smart device. Vashon Fresh operated as a pilot project in 2017. The model provided an easy route for growers and vendors to sell their products at higher margin than wholesale,



acquire new customers, and receive advertising without negatively impacting their sales at the Saturday markets. It also provided a new marketplace for small scale producers that do not participate in the farmer's market. Vashon Fresh is a project of the Vashon Island Growers Association.

Increasing Institutional Demand

- Seattle's Farm-to-Table program supported 54 preschool and child care programs to place 205 farm orders worth \$57,316 from 20 farms using environmentally sustainable growing practices.
- The Local Institutional Food Team, a multi-stakeholder collaborative, continued to provide technical assistance to institutional purchasers looking for local farm products.
- Rainier Valley Food Bank purchased nearly \$30,000 directly from farms in 2017 as part of a broader organizational goal of increasing their impact on the food system through their purchasing power.

KEY STRATEGY: IMPROVING FOOD SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE

To meet the growing demand for local products, farmers and food entrepreneurs require appropriately scaled food system infrastructure - the aggregators, processors, distributors, and kitchen - necessary to develop products and connect to markets.

Much of the regional infrastructure needed to grow our local food economy no longer exists or is in need of improvement. Efforts to rebuild local farm and food system infrastructure continue to gather momentum.

Aggregation and Cold Storage in Snoqualmie Valley

The lack of on-farm aggregation and cold storage space continues to be a challenge for many farms and organizations seeking to grow. Thanks to Goose and Gander Farm, that is beginning to change in the Snoqualmie Valley. Goose and Gander Farm has served as a shared aggregation and packing site for several farmers and farm organizations. In 2017, additional site improvements were made to the farm that will facilitate the continued growth and development of these organizations, thereby benefiting Valley farmers.



Mobile Meat Processing Unit Project

Efforts to bring a USDA certified, mobile meat processing unit to King County accelerated in 2017. A survey of livestock producers



indicated that there was sufficient demand in King County to support the mobile processor a couple of days per week, with much of the demand from producers north of I-90. Two workshops on local meat marketing and USDA processing were held. These workshops addressed issues related to supply, market demand, logistics, cost, and regulations and were attended by over 50 producers.

Growing the Supply of Pasture Raised Eggs: Cascadia Cooperative Farms

Cascadia Cooperative Farms (CCF) seeks to create new markets for small local farms that raise pastured poultry using ethical, humane, and ecologically responsible practices. In 2017, CCF continued to build the organizational structure of the coop by developing bylaws, a membership guide and animal husbandry standards. CCF also set up a production area at Goose and Gander Farm, including a commercial egg-washing machine, a cooler, and a shipping container for dry storage. To date, six farms have joined CCF and are growing their flocks with the intention of starting egg sales under a CCF brand in the summer of 2018.



King Conservation District Regional Food System Grant Program

The King Conservation District Regional Food System Grant Program was developed to support the goals of the King County Local Food Initiative, serving as a catalyst for making local food production environmentally and economically sustainable. The program funds projects that contribute to the economic viability of local farmers, encourages new farmers, expands acreage in food production, supports system infrastructure, improves food access, and increases demand for King County farm products. In 2017, KCD awarded \$607,406 in grants for nine projects aimed at strengthening our local food system.



**KEY STRATEGY:
REDUCING FOOD WASTE**

In 2017, 175,470 tons of commercially collected food waste from businesses and residents entered King County’s Cedar Hills Regional Landfill. Wasted food means wasted resources – the water, energy and fuel used to produce, package and transport food from farms to our plates. In addition, greenhouse gas emissions in King County that result from food consumption are second only to emissions from personal transportation.

- King County Solid Waste Division (SWD) awarded four new commercial food waste grants in 2017 for projects that aim to reduce food waste generated by the commercial sector (non-residential) within King County.
- To encourage food waste prevention at home, SWD extended its popular Food: Too Good To Waste outreach program to Spanish-speaking audiences via tabling at Latino grocery stores and distribution of outreach materials in Spanish.
- A commercial food waste characterization study to identify business sectors with highest potential for food waste diversion was completed. Results indicated that the largest organics waste generators in the county are restaurants. This information will help inform next steps for commercial food waste projects.



- Through the King County Green Schools Program, SWD assisted K-12 schools to reduce wasted food. The program created a food waste reduction student pledge and communication tools about reducing food waste.
- In partnership with Auburn School District, City of Auburn and University of Washington, the program trained UW students to conduct school cafeteria and kitchen audits and helped schools set up share tables for unopened, uneaten items, and connected schools with nonprofits that rescue food for community members in need.

2017 LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE INDICATOR



REDUCING FOOD WASTE



8,000 public contacts made through Food: Too Good To Waste community outreach in English and Spanish

100 tons of food waste diverted from disposal at the landfill by composting or food rescue through SWD commercial food waste grants.



King County SWD Commercial Food Waste Grants

Cedar Grove, supported by a King County Solid Waste Division commercial food waste grant,



conducted a project to increase diversion of commercial food waste from landfill disposal by focusing on restaurants and farmer's markets in economically and culturally diverse cities in suburban King County. The company worked with 17 restaurants, new to food waste composting, whose owners are people of color, foreign-born, and/or whose primary language is not English. Cedar Grove conducted waste audits and implement customized food waste recycling programs for the restaurants. The project also worked with two farmers markets to provide signage and training on best practices for farmer's market vendor composting.



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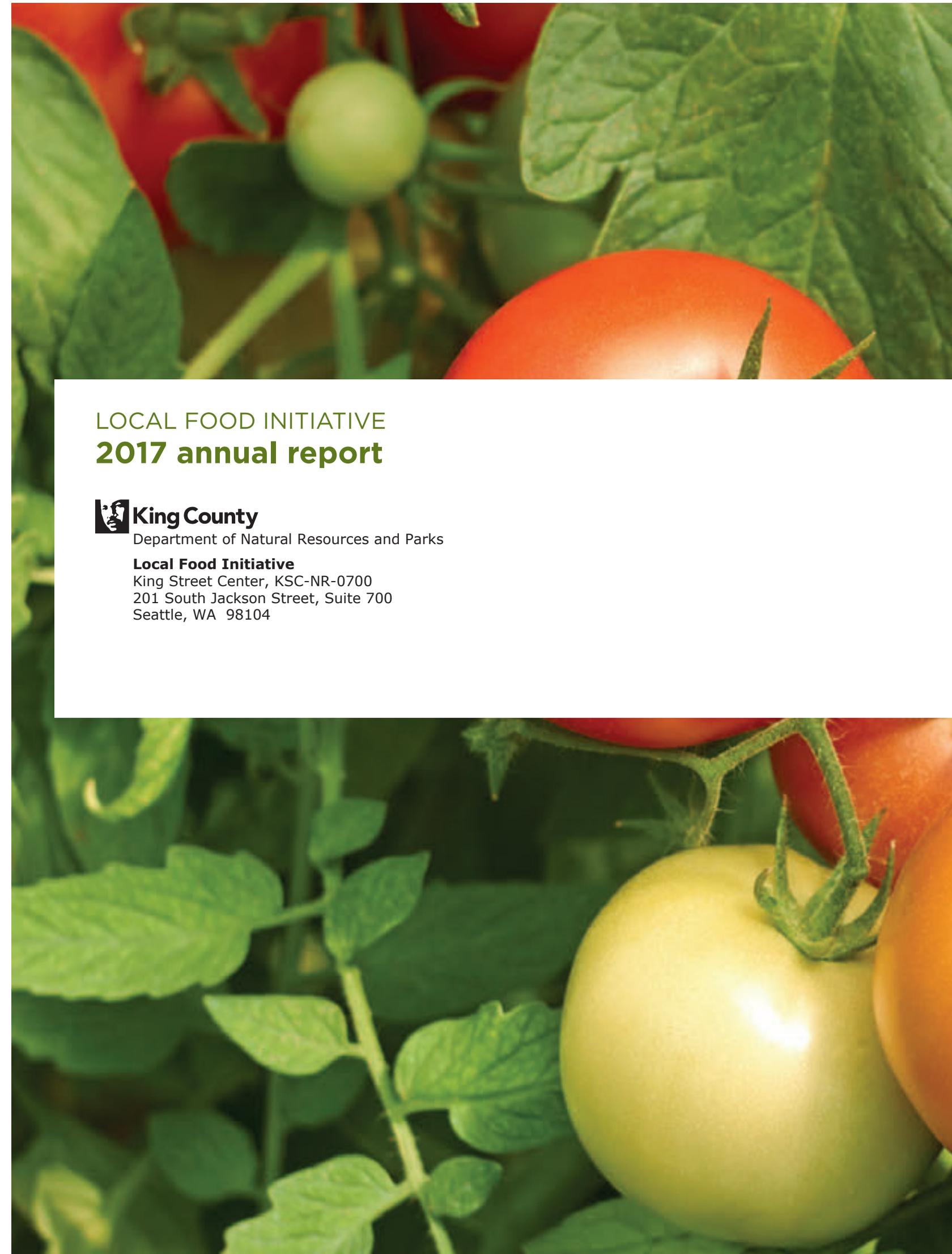
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A close-up photograph of tomato plants. In the foreground, a large, round, yellowish-green tomato is prominent. To its right, a portion of a red tomato is visible. In the background, several more red tomatoes are hanging from the vine, surrounded by lush green leaves. The lighting is bright, highlighting the textures of the tomatoes and leaves.

LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE **2017 annual report**



King County

Department of Natural Resources and Parks

Local Food Initiative

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