



Baltimore Food Policy Initiative Implementing the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact 2017

In 2015 Baltimore City signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) and in 2016 received the highest score for governance related to food policy at the MUFPP convening in Rome. Baltimore is committed to the MUFPP and has used the pact as a framework for its work.

1. GOVERNANCE

- **Facilitate collaboration across agencies and with stakeholders**
 - **Baltimore Food Policy Initiative:** An intergovernmental collaboration with three lead agencies, that works with 12 additional agencies.
 - **Food Policy Action Coalition (Food PAC):** A stakeholder group of over 60 people who work in all areas of the food system to address food issues throughout Baltimore.
 - Together, they address health, economic and environmental disparities to increase access to healthy, affordable food in Baltimore City's food deserts.
- **Food Environment Maps as Policy Tools**
 - **Food Desert Mapping:** Baltimore has created a citywide map and 14 council district maps to show who lives in food deserts, and a snapshot of the food environment.
 - **Passed Legislation:** These maps led to an 80% Personal Property Tax Credit in Food Desert Retail Incentive Areas for Supermarkets. Within less than a year, a new supermarket was built in a neighborhood that was previously a food desert for over 5,000 residents.

2. SUSTAINABLE DIETS AND NUTRITION

- **Summer Meal Food Procurement:** Significantly changed the requirements for Summer meal contracts in the city:
 - High nutritional standards for the meals, including no juice
 - Meals are now served for the full length of summer not just six weeks
 - Purchasing from local farms
 - Emphasis on recycling and waste reduction
- **Online SNAP Benefits:**
 - The Virtual Supermarket is an innovative program to allow seniors and disabled residents living in food deserts to order online, and have the local supermarket deliver the food and accept SNAP benefits (aka food stamps) at the time of delivery.
 - This program was the prototype for changing the 2014 Farm Bill to allow for online SNAP benefits so residents can pay with their food stamps at the time of ordering the food. This opens new opportunities for residents with limited resources, transportation, mobility, and/or time to access healthy affordable food from supermarkets.

- Baltimore City is one of the pilot locations for three food retailers, which will roll out in 2018.
- The retailers are Shoprite, Amazon and Safeway.

3. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY

- **Resident Food Equity Advisors:**
 - The formation of the Resident Food Equity Advisors is one of BFPI's newest endeavors.
 - It was designed to address equity by including residents' voices to influence and advise the City's Food Desert Retail and Food Resilience policies and plans.
 - Over 80 residents from all over the city applied to be advisors, with 16 residents selected representing each of the 14 council districts, each with their own food environment map.
 - The Resident Food Equity Advisors is a six-month commitment, meeting monthly to learn and to provide input to food policy and planning strategies for the City.
 - This first cohort was a great success and we plan to continue growing the Resident Food Equity Advisors program.

4. FOOD PRODUCTION

- **Urban Agriculture Policy:** Baltimore has developed excellent policies for urban agriculture including an urban agriculture tax credit, a land leasing initiative, and zoning that allows for hoop houses and farm stands for urban farms.
 - The city has about 25 urban farms and 90 food-producing community gardens, yet there is much opportunity to continue expanding how and where food is grown in the city.
- **Green Network Plan:** Urban food production is one strategy to turn vacant lots into productive resources, and the Green Network Plan is taking a comprehensive look at how urban agriculture will be integrated into a larger vision for the City's green infrastructure.

5. FOOD SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION

- **Food Resilience:**
 - The Uprising and Winter Storm Jonas made it clear that Baltimore's food system and residents already prone to food insecurity are made more vulnerable during unforeseen circumstances.
 - In 2015, an Emergency Food Working created a formal food protocol for the City's Emergency Operations Plan. This effort is led by a Food Resilience Planner, who reports to the Food Policy Director, and who staffs the Emergency Operations Center as a point of contact for food-related emergency response.
 - Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future will release the Food Resilience Assessment for Baltimore at the end of June 2017.

6. FOOD WASTE

- **Food Waste Strategy:**
 - The Office of Sustainability has recently completed a Food Waste Strategy for food waste reduction, recovery, and composting.
 - This is an area of the pact where we are just beginning, whereas in other sections, Baltimore has been a leader on the issues for years.