

Request for Proposals
NORTHEAST OHIO LOCAL FOOD ASSESSMENT AND PLAN
Cleveland, OH

Deadline: February 3, 2010

Purpose

As the Northeast Ohio region transitions toward a sustainable future, food will play an increasingly significant role in shaping the regional economy. The 1.3 million residents of Cuyahoga County purchased \$3.4 billion dollars of food in 2006; accounting for an astounding 35% of the total \$10 billion spent in the sixteen counties that comprise the Northeast Ohio region. Unfortunately, a great deal of this money was spent on food that was produced and processed elsewhere, creating minimal benefit to the Northeast Ohio economy.

The costs of producing and processing food from other states or countries is a major concern of communities across the U.S. and conversely communities across the nation are developing proactive and innovative public policies to establish local food economies that not only increase access to local food but develop major economic initiatives around the processing, distribution and waste recovery of food and food products. Communities with vacant and foreclosed properties see the benefit of new neighborhoods and local job creation creating a multitude of opportunities for residents and businesses.

Just as the economic benefits of a local food system are manifold, so are the public health benefits. The opportunities for connecting economic development and public health are considerable. Only 22% of Cuyahoga County residents consume the recommended five (5) or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day. A growing body of research suggests that the chronic lack of fresh healthy food is detrimental to people of all ages. The rise in obesity (especially in children), Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and cancer can be directly linked to diets consisting mainly of processed and refined foods and a minimal amount of fresh food.

Over the past five years, the Northeast Ohio region has emerged as a national leader in the innovation of sustainable local food systems due to the efforts of many organizations and innovative private-public partnerships. In Cuyahoga County alone these efforts have resulted in 220 community gardens, twenty two (22) urban market gardens, twenty (20) farmers' markets, several CSA programs, and an initiative that has brought fresh, healthy food into several corner stores in Cleveland. *SustainLane*, a national web-based media company focused on living healthy on a green planet, performs annual, peer-reviewed sustainability rankings of the largest 50 cities in the United States. They ranked Cleveland #2 nationally in the development of local food systems. However despite this progress, the Northeast Ohio region only produces 1% of the food that is consumed locally. Can this be increased to 5% or 10% in the near future and even 20% over the long term?

To do this, the Cleveland Foundation has provided funding to a coalition of local nonprofits to use this momentum as a springboard for the development of a strategic business plan that will map out how to take the local food market to scale. The major goal is to create a significant economic development strategy for the Northeast Ohio region based on the production, processing and distribution of food.

To that end, this RFP is being issued to select a suitably qualified professional team to assist in establishing this economic development strategy by assessing the current market, analyzing the growth potential, and creating and developing a timeframe for achieving production and consumption goals.

Major objectives include, but are not limited to;

- Generate new business opportunities to create a new economic system built around create local, green jobs, businesses, and retail opportunities,
- Create new opportunities for urban farming and community gardening on vacant land,
- Development of specialty crops and products that can meet external demands and markets,
- Strengthen the relationship between the urban and rural food economies to create better market access for rural producers, preserve farmland, and create opportunities for new farms,
- Develop processing and distribution infrastructure to extend market for locally produced foods,
- Generate dollars from institutional purchasing,
- Establish grocery stores and other retail establishments in areas lacking access to fresh food,
- Increase farmers markets' community supported agriculture programs, and other direct marketing strategies,
- Identify avenues for youth to grow food for their own communities,
- Reduce climate impacts through fewer miles traveled, and
- Recommend organizational structure(s) and identify public-private partnerships necessary for implementation of this plan.

Project Partners

The core project managers in the planning process are ParkWorks and Neighborhood Progress, Inc (NPI). The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (FPC) and Kent State University's Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative will serve as lead partners to assist in shaping the project and setting goals and deliverables. The project partners will play an active role on the planning team in collaboration with the selected consultant.

Leading this planning process is ParkWorks, a Cleveland-based non-profit working on behalf of the project partners. ParkWorks is a leader in creating and executing strategies that promote neighborhood and downtown revitalization through the development and programming of public spaces. Through our expertise and collaboration with strategic partners, ParkWorks develops and expands the use of public spaces to promote neighborhood and downtown revitalization. ParkWorks continues to build its reputation as results-driven and uses its depth of resources, expertise and passion to deliver tangible results.

ParkWorks has participated in the planning of Re-Imagining a More Sustainable Cleveland and has an established relationship with all partners involved. The collaboration between ParkWorks and the listed partners goes beyond this particular project and will continue to do so in the future.

Neighborhood Progress, Inc.'s mission is to restore and maintain the health and vitality of Cleveland's neighborhoods through private investment and support for community initiatives. NPI acts as a catalyst for neighborhood change through strategically investing in community development organizations, their projects and their vision for the future. Neighborhood Progress convened the first ReImagining a More Sustainable Cleveland Land ReUse Study with KSU UDC and the City of Cleveland, is carrying out an initiative that is creating 58 vacant land reuse pilot projects around the city, and is supporting system and policy change work on vacant land reuse and urban agriculture.

The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (FPC) was formed in April of 2007 and has grown to include more than 40 community partners collaborating on a vision to grow a healthy, equitable, and sustainable food system in the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County. The FPC brings individuals and organizations together from all aspects of the food system to:

- (1) Create a quarterly forum that brings people together from all aspects of the food system to generate new relationships, cross learning and collaboration;
- (2) Initiate research, policies, and programs that increase healthy food access and social and economic opportunity for food producers, distributors, and consumers; and
- (3) Serve as resource to the community to assist in solution oriented regional food system development.

The Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative (CUDC) is a community service organization with a professional staff of architects, planners, urban designers, and landscape designers committed to improving the quality of urban places through technical design assistance, research and advocacy. Supported by the [College of Architecture and Environmental Design](#) at Kent State University, the CUDC offers urban design expertise and applied research in the service of urban communities, design professionals, and public policy efforts.

Project Schedule

Proposals Due		2/3/2010
Review proposals with working group	2 weeks	2/17/2010
Select teams for interview	1 week	2/24/2010
Interviews	1 week	3/10/2010
Final Selection		3/15/2010
Development Phase	8 months	
Local food economic conditions and economic impact analysis presentation to steering committee	2 months	5/12/2010
Business plan preparation	4 months	9/1/2010
Steering Committee review and feedback on business plan	2-3 weeks	9/15/2010
Plan Refinement	1 month	10/13/2010
Plan Development/Review of updated designs	2 weeks	10/27/2010
Present final plan to public officials		11/10/2010

Scope of Services

The selected consultant will lead a team qualified to complete a strategic business plan for local food system development in Northeast Ohio that serves as an economic engine for the region, including the following specific services and work products:

1. Assess the status of the five key segments of the food system in Northeast Ohio including production, distribution, consumption, processing, and food waste recovery. Assessment of consumption will be confined to Cuyahoga County but capacity for food waste recovery, production, processing, and distribution will be concentrated within the 16-county region. This assessment should include but not be limited to,

- current levels of production
- capacity for increased production based on consumer demand and land availability
- determining land suitability for inner city vs. outer ring sites by comparing ecological and monetary costs of making sites productive and land values
- establishing percentage goals (e.g. 20%) of food produced and consumed locally
- current and future demand for locally-grown food
- the direct, indirect and induced economic impacts of strengthening the local food economy (eg. the multiplier effect), and
- key investments that would scale up local food projects to create jobs and economic activity, which may include the identification of:
 - target markets,
 - specific food products and their value,
 - season extension,
 - education and job training programs,
 - and off-shoot businesses (eg. food processing).

(Please note that much data is available through local partners. See **Appendix A** for an inventory of available data.)

2. Identify and prioritize the needed financial, educational and capacity building resources.

3. Identify the major strategies for achieving the major goals and objectives:

- Generate new business opportunities that will create a new economic systems built around create local, green jobs, businesses, and retail opportunities,
 - Development of specialty crops and products that can meet external demands,
 - Develop processing and distribution infrastructure to extend market for locally produced foods,
 - Analyze the abilities of local businesses to pay workers sufficient wages while maintaining affordable price-points for low-income consumers
- Create new opportunities for urban farming and community gardening on vacant land,
 - Identify avenues for youth to grow food for their own communities,
 - Examine ability of community food enterprises to become economically self-sufficient after growing to benefit from economies of scale
- Strengthen the relationship between the urban and rural food economies to create better market, access for rural producers, preserve farmland, and create opportunities for new farms,
 - Examine grocery store and other retail opportunities in areas lacking access to fresh food,
 - Increase farmers markets' community supported agriculture programs, and other direct marketing strategies,
- Generate dollars from institutional purchasing,
- Examine environmental, economic, health impacts of an enhanced local food economy
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- Recommend organizational structures and identify public-private partnership necessary for implementation of this plan.

4. Develop recommendations on how to eliminate existing barriers (such as lack of infrastructure, incentives, financial resources, and policies) and how they can be developed to support an enhanced local food economy for all components – production, processing, distribution, etc. Explore creative opportunities to offset costs of government incentives or financial resources through savings on health care, social services, and other benefits.

5. Recommend the organization(s) and structure that would be responsible for the implementing this plan, identifying and pursuing funding opportunities, and working with the local, regional, state and federal governments. The consultant should include the current stakeholders, including the Food Policy Coalition, in this analysis. The plan would include mechanisms for evaluating progress of the business plan's recommendations.

6. Participation in an effective public process led by the project partners that generates consensus on the local food assessment, commitment to its implementation, and sustained engagement in its operation and maintenance. Respondents should assume the following schedule:

- Pre-planning: meeting with stakeholders and steering committee, convened by the project partners
- Planning: develop system options for input and feedback from steering committee
- Plan refinement: reviewed by the project partners and steering committee
- Plan presentation: presentation of study outcomes and results to public officials
- Four (4) trips to Cleveland

7. The fee for this process is \$70,000. The fee includes all travel and related expenses.

Respondents are encouraged to consider a multidisciplinary team.

Proposal Contents

Respondents to this RFQ are requested to submit seven (7) copies of a bound document containing the following items, arranged in the order listed below and tabbed or otherwise separated for easy access to each item.

1. *Letter of Interest*: Provide the name and address of the lead consultant, contact person, and a brief statement of the respondent's interest in the project and specific qualifications for the assignment.
2. *Project Approach*: Outline the philosophy that will guide the proposed work process and products, and describe methods of team evaluation, quality assurance, budget control and maintenance of the project schedule.
3. *Project Team*: Construct an organizational chart of the consultant team, including the names and titles of key personnel of each firm. Following the organization chart, provide a brief description of the history and professional services of each firm, highlighting relevant experience and significant completed projects and the résumés of key personnel assigned to this project.
4. *Project Experience*: Provide detailed descriptions of up to five (5) similar projects completed by the lead firm on the team, including only projects in which the key personnel assigned to this project directed the planning effort. Include a reference/client contact for each project, approximate cost, and project start/completion dates.
5. *Work Program*: Detail the specific steps of a proposed work program, including team responsibilities for each task and a description of project deliverables.
6. *Schedule*: Develop a proposed project timeline of team participation which shows the duration of each task of the Work Program and indicates the schedule for Northeast Ohio Local Food Team meetings, public participation activities, and project reviews by local government agencies and permitting authorities.

7. *Certifications:* Please include any professional documentation and certifications.
8. *Additional Supporting Materials:* Respondents are invited to include a maximum of five (5) additional pages of information not covered above which may strengthen their proposal or describe any unique qualifications or experiences relevant to this project.
9. *Fee:* The fee for this process is \$70,000. Please be aware that this includes all travel and reimbursable expenses.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be considered by the Selection Committee to determine the firm or individual(s) most qualified and best suited to perform the work:

1. The ability, capacity, skill, reputation and experience of the project team to provide the services and deliverables required.
2. Overall approach, corporate philosophy, and understanding of the objectives for the Northeast Ohio Local Food Assessment in terms of quality, creativity and implementation strategy.
3. Approach to involving community stakeholders in the planning process and experience of working with an appointed oversight task force.
4. The quality of completed contracts for similar projects with an emphasis on research regarding economic development through local food systems.
5. Experience of the Project Manager and key project staff with an emphasis on demonstrated ability to deliver high-quality studies and research reports within a short time frame.
6. The experience of former clients with respect to performance on time and within budget, quality, team coordination.
7. The team's relevant work, especially projects or processes with an emphasis on local food research, analysis, and assessments.

Selection Committee and Process

The Selection Committee will be made up of several individuals representing the following agencies and organizations:

- ParkWorks
- Neighborhood Progress, Inc.
- Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition
- Kent State University's Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative
- Additional members of the Steering Committee

The proposals will be reviewed by this committee which may invite any or all qualifying firms to make an oral presentation to the committee, the date of which will be determined with travel in mind. If an agreement cannot be reached with the selected team, the negotiations will be closed and re-started with the next highest ranked team.

Submission Requirements

Proposals should be submitted in seven (7) copies of a bound document containing the information specified in Proposal Contents above.

Proposals will be received by **ParkWorks, Attn: Northeast Ohio Local Food Assessment** at 1422 Euclid Avenue, Suite 733 Cleveland, Ohio 44115 until **12 p.m.**, Eastern Standard Time, **Wednesday, February 3, 2010**. All copies of the proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope or package labeled "Northeast Ohio Local Food Assessment." Submittals received after that time will be considered late and will be returned unopened. All proposals must be valid for forty-five (45) days from the date of receipt.

ParkWorks will not assume any responsibility for oral instructions, suggestions or interpretations of the requirements of this RFP. Any material change in its contents will be submitted to all offers through issuance of a written RFP Addendum. All questions should be addressed in writing to:

ParkWorks
1422 Euclid Avenue, Suite 733
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
E-mail: LDiFranco@parkworks.org

ParkWorks reserves the right to reject any and all submittals, and to waive any minor irregularities in the process. It also reserves the right to request revisions or seek new proposals when it is clearly in the public interest to do so.

Appendix A – Available Data

Countryside Conservancy

Geographic Region- Northeast Ohio - 16 county region

- Farmers' market locations
- Farm stand and U-pick operation locations
- Support services locations (i.e. agricultural supply companies)
- Location of Agriculture/Natural Resource Educators within OSUE county offices
- Location of livestock operations

Ag-Bio Industry Cluster- FFEF

Geographic Region- Advance Northeast Ohio - 16 county region

Base Data for All Counties

- land cover
- roads
- county boundaries
- watersheds
- cities
- census
- soils
- topography
- flood zones
- property boundaries
- CAUV
- market value
- tractor/equipment sales
- grain elevators
- fertilizer dealers
- seed dealers
- bee keepers
- OSUE Ag/NR Educators
- meat processors
- dairy operations
- CSA operations
- number of farms
- number of acres
- consumption status maps
- meat processors
- median income
- consuming units for fruits and vegetables
- livestock production size for operations
- ODA food processing list