Charter
Humboldt Food Policy Council
Ratified on February 13, 2014

VISION

The Humboldt Food Policy Council envisions a sustainable local food system that provides affordable and accessible foods for all, contributes to the economic viability of the region, and supports the vitality of every part of the food system - from seed to table to soil. HFPC values a culturally-appropriate, accessible, equitable, and sustainable food system.

The Humboldt Food Policy Council engages diverse stakeholders from the food system sectors; production, processing, distribution, marketing, consumption, and waste/recycling. In addition, the HFPC includes community advocates from food security organizations, public and environmental health, and other interested organizations. These stakeholders work collaboratively to achieve HFPC goals, share information, and build capacity for local food system improvements.

MISSION

The HFPC works to enhance a regional food system that is equitable, culturally appropriate, and both environmentally and economically sustainable by facilitating collaborative partnerships of diverse stakeholders throughout the food system.

AREAS OF FOCUS

Humboldt Food Policy Council’s goals and activities are focused on the following areas:

1. Sustainable Agriculture

Assure that local land use policies enable future sustainability, contribute to economic viability, promote environmental health and support the next generation of farmers.

2. Access to Healthy, Affordable, and High Quality Food

Assure that residents have reliable access to sufficient affordable, healthful, fresh and culturally-appropriate food in consumer marketplaces, institutional venues, food assistance programs and community gardens.

3. Local Distribution and Processing

Assure a local distribution and processing system that effectively and efficiently connects local producers, processors, vendors, and consumers.
4. **Demand for Locally Produced Food**

Increase the demand for healthful, locally-produced, prepared, and processed food.

5. **Local Markets**

Expand and diversify market opportunities for local, healthy, and culturally-appropriate food, including retail, wholesale, and institutional sales.

6. **Economic Viability and Opportunity**

Assure that farming and food system occupations are economically viable and respected, with livelihoods and opportunities for all food system and farm workers.

7. **Food Education and Agricultural Literacy**

Assure that residents have the opportunity to gain knowledge and accurate information in order to acquire or produce, prepare, cook and preserve healthy food. Create a greater understanding of food production and the factors that enable a thriving local food system.

8. **Waste and Recycling**

Assure that the local food system is a sustainable, closed-loop system that appropriately collects and processes food waste and other organic materials. Support the expansion of efforts to capture energy from processed organic materials and/or convert to compost for land application.

9. **Urban Agriculture**

Assure that residents have access to land and affordable resources to produce food for their households and their community.

**MEMBERSHIP**

**Associate Members**

The Humboldt Food Policy Council’s Associate Membership is open to all interested and supportive individuals and organizations. Associate Members provide needed expertise, expand the diversity of the group, and link to necessary allies and resources. Associate Members are encouraged, but not required, to participate in the various subcommittees.

**Voting Members**

It is highly desirable that the Humboldt Food Policy Council’s Voting Membership include individuals who represent a business, organization or institution, except for community members
who represent themselves. This organizational representation lends credibility to the HFPC and links organizations that support the work and vision of the HFPC.

If a Voting Member represents an organization, this member must be consistent throughout the member’s term of service. This member cannot be replaced unless there is a consensus vote by the Voting Membership. In the event a Voting Member is unable to participate in a scheduled meeting, a proxy vote may be submitted in writing; an informed replacement may be sent to engage in discussion, but shall not vote.

**Voting Member Representation**

The Humboldt Food Policy Council will have a minimum of 9 Voting Members and a maximum of 27 Voting Members. There are nine main categories, listed below, from which to draw membership. Within each category, there are specific interest groups that need to be considered as valuable perspectives to be represented in the HFPC. It is a goal to have at least one Voting Member from each of the nine categories. Representation from these interests will ensure economic, cultural, religious, geographic and ethnic diversity and provide the appropriate balance necessary to achieve the HFPC purpose.

1. **Production**

   Includes agricultural businesses (farmers, ranchers, dairy), farm workers, and fisheries

2. **Processing**

   Includes value-added food businesses, food manufacturers, co-packers, and brewers/distillers

3. **Distribution**

   Includes retail and wholesale distribution businesses

4. **Markets**

   Includes grocers, restaurateurs, food event planners, and direct marketing outlets such as CSAs, and Farmers’ Markets

5. **Waste and Recycling**

   Includes green promotion businesses, composting, recycling, waste collection and transportation

6. **Civic/Government/Tribal**

   Includes elected officials and administrative departments such as public health, social services, planning, and education
7. Non-Government Organizations (NGO)

Includes non-governmental organizations, such as non-profit organizations, foundations, and for-profit businesses; also hospitals, health care providers, and faith-based organizations

8. Food Security Advocates

Includes those who work to assure healthy food is accessible to all, support and provide education about the economics of the home and kitchen (budgeting, gardening, cooking classes, and food preservation), and change laws and systems around healthy food security

9. Community

Includes community members and residents with an interest in supporting the mission of the HFPC

Voting Member Responsibilities

The effective functioning of the HFPC is dependent on the commitment and regular participation of its members. Voting Membership responsibilities include:

1. Support the Vision, Mission, and Areas of Focus of the HFPC.
2. Participate in at least 8 out of the 10 regularly scheduled meetings per year in person or by phone.
3. Inform the HFPC facilitator if unable to participate in a regularly scheduled meeting.
4. Actively engage and participate in HFPC work, including subcommittees.
5. Bring relevant information on food system issues to the HFPC and information from HFPC back to their community and/or organization.
6. Be informed and up-to-date on relevant issues, especially prior to voting on an issue.
7. Agree to assist as a mentor to new Voting Members after first year of service.
8. Three Voting Members will volunteer to act as the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee term is one year (See Steering Committee under Roles for more information).

Subcommittees

The HFPC relies on subcommittees to help move critical work forward. Voting Members are required, and Associate Members are encouraged, to actively participate in at least one subcommittee.

Each subcommittee is dedicated to the HFPC Vision, Mission and Areas of Focus. These subcommittees meet on a regular basis to develop new projects and policy recommendations. Each subcommittee elects a chair who is responsible for scheduling meetings, ensuring notes are kept from each subcommittee meeting, and that the notes are given to the Steering Committee Chair in a timely manner.
Process of Selecting Voting Members

Interested new members must review the HFPC charter and submit the Voting Member Interest Form. Interested members must attend several meetings, as many as needed for the group and the interested member to feel comfortable and well informed. Through the process of decision-making outlined in this charter, the current Voting Members will select new Voting Members. New Voting Members will identify a current Voting Member to serve as a mentor, and will request orientation to HFPC work, as needed.

Process of Renewal

Periodic rotation of Voting Membership is desirable to allow a fresh infusion of new ideas and perspectives, which is necessary to keep the organization relevant and responsive to the needs of the wider community. Accordingly, Voting Members are expected to commit to a two-year term of service with the membership year starting March 1. Voting Members wishing to remain on the HFPC may do so if granted by the group consensus.

Termination of Voting Membership

A Voting Member who misses 3 meetings in a calendar year, without having informed the HFPC Coordinator prior to their absence, and without having taken the time to inform themselves of the group’s actions and activities shall be considered to have resigned. A Voting Member who is deemed by the core group to have failed to live up to the purpose and principles of the HFPC Charter may be terminated by group consensus, less the affected member. Voting membership may be voluntarily terminated by submission of a letter of resignation to the HFPC Coordinator.

DECISION - MAKING AND VOTING PROCESS

Quorum

The Humboldt Food Policy Council must have a quorum of the total Voting Membership present either in person or by phone in order to conduct substantive work of the group. A quorum consists of a *simple majority* of the Voting Members. The requirement of a quorum is protection against unrepresentative action by an unduly small number of persons.

Modified Consensus

The Humboldt Food Policy Council uses a modified consensus process for decision-making. Consensus decision-making strives to reach an agreement among a majority of members and alleviate the objections of the minority to achieve the most agreeable decision. Thus, consensus is reached when all members agree to a decision, and each member can support the decision, whether or not he or she prefers the decision, because all voices were heard and it was reached fairly and openly.
A gradient of agreement process will be used for consensus building and decision-making. The gradient includes three issue stances and an abstention/recusal option: 1. Agree/support (green card); 2. Have questions or concerns (yellow card); 3. Oppose/cannot support (red card); and 4. Abstain or will not vote (white card). The white card is a non-issue stance used when a Voting Member has a conflict of interest or represents an agency that cannot take a stand on a policy issue, or when a member prefers to abstain from voting.

A formal vote can only be called when a quorum has been established. When a vote is called, a decision will not be considered a decision of the Council unless it receives a minimum of agreement (green card) by 75% of Voting Members present and opposition (red card) by no more than one voting member. This is often called “consensus less one.” If more than one member opposes (red card) a decision, it will not be passed and if fewer than 75% of Voting Members agree (green card), it will not be passed.

The decisions of the HFPC do not preclude individual members from making decisions or going forward with their own initiatives under their own name and outside of the HFPC.

**Calling for a Vote and Voting Matters**

Not all of the work of the Council will require a formal vote or use voting procedures. Any Voting Member may request a vote/decision of the membership. The Facilitator and/or Coordinator will facilitate the discussion and voting process.

When the HFPC needs group cohesion for consensus building or to move the discussion forward, everyone at the meeting may use the colored cards. During a formal vote, only Voting Members may use the cards. A formal vote is needed in a limited number of situations, including when the HFPC makes an impact outside the group, weighs in on legislation, makes an official position of the HFPC, applies for funding, makes changes to the Charter, experiences a stalemate, or approves of membership.

**Charter Amendment and Policy Stance Requirements**

No amendments to this Charter and no formal policy position, statement or stance of the Council will be proposed and voted on during the same meeting. All charter amendments and formal positions must be either proposed in one meeting and voted on (or modified and voted on) at the following meeting, or published and noticed to members as a voting item at least three days in advance of the vote. Any charter change or position must be put in writing and be clearly marked on the agenda as a voting item. The results of all formal votes will be recorded in the minutes.

**Email and Phone Votes**

Votes may be taken outside of regular meetings by email or phone poll for urgent issues. The approval criteria for email and phone voting are similar to, but slightly more stringent than, meeting votes. There must be no opposition (red card) to email/phone votes. The criteria for
email/phone votes are: the email must recommend a vote; a simple majority of Voting Members must reply to the vote request; at least 75% of votes must be in support (green card) of the recommendation; and there must be no opposition (red card) to the recommendation. Modified recommendations may also be circulated but must meet the same approval criteria.

All email and phone votes will be reviewed and ratified during the next subsequent meeting where a quorum is present. The results of all email and phone votes will be recorded and included in the minutes of the next regular meeting.

MEETINGS

Meetings of the HFPC are open to the public. Regular meetings of the HFPC are held approximately ten times a year at various locations around Humboldt County, generally the second Thursday of the month from 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM. If an additional meeting is desired, or a shift in a meeting schedule is required or agreed upon by the Voting Membership, the HFPC Coordinator will notify all Members of the schedule.

ROLES

Voting Members and Associate Members

All Members are expected to participate in HFPC meetings to share insight, provide knowledge, and work toward HFPC Vision, Mission and Areas of Focus. Members also represent HFPC to the broader community, food system stakeholders and local policy and decision-makers. Members provide innovative thinking, leadership and proactive engagement in furthering the HFPC vision. Voting members are required, and Associate Members are encouraged, to participate in subcommittees (see Voting Member Responsibilities).

Steering Committee

Three Voting Members shall volunteer and be voted upon by consensus to be the Steering Committee. The responsibility of the Steering Committee is to understand issues and concerns of the membership and translate this into appropriate and engaging meetings. The Steering Committee also brings content knowledge of food systems to the group, including best practices and trends from around the state. If needed, the Steering Committee serves as an advisor to the HFPC Coordinator and subcommittees on process and content areas. In partnership with the Facilitator and the Coordinator, the Steering Committee will create the HFPC meeting agenda and review the prior month’s minutes. Agendas and prior meeting minutes will be distributed one week prior to the scheduled meeting date. In partnership with the members and the Coordinator, the Steering Committee shall review the Charter on an annual basis and propose updates as necessary. The Steering Committee term shall be one year.

Facilitator
A third-party facilitator will be retained as needed to provide meeting facilitation, guidance on process and stakeholder participation, and develop reports of meetings and other processes facilitated. Selection of the Facilitator will be by consensus vote. The Facilitator, in partnership with the Coordinator and the Steering Committee will craft the agenda and review the prior month’s minutes. During the HFPC meetings, the Facilitator will lead the meeting, guide the dialogue, and lead any decision-making process. Outside of the meetings, the Facilitator will be available to provide assistance to subcommittees, as needed. Absent the presence or need for a Facilitator, this responsibility will fall to the HFPC Coordinator and/or Steering Committee.

**Coordinator**

The Coordinator is a staff position from the host organization. The Coordinator provides communication and assistance for all aspects of the HFPC. The Coordinator assists in developing meeting agendas, setting and announcing meetings, ensuring meeting minutes are recorded, providing assistance to subcommittees, maintaining FPC member records, supporting the work of the members, promoting collaboration, resolving conflicts, and supporting consensus decision making. The Coordinator also works on grant writing and fundraising, where appropriate, and acts as a liaison with the host organization.

Charter ratified on 2/13/2014

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