



Memorandum

TO: Honorable Whatcom County Council
Honorable Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

FROM: Riley Sweeney, Chair, Whatcom County
Food System Committee

DATE: July 12, 2023

RE: **Food System Plan**

The Food System Committee completed their work on the draft Food System Plan and approved it on February 28th, 2023. This plan was presented at the Public Works and Health Committee of the Council meetings on April 11th and April 25th. The Public Works and Health Committee asked the Food System Committee to consider edits and additional input from representatives of the Whatcom Farm Bureau and Whatcom Family Farmers. After a robust public process, edits were incorporated into the Food System Plan and an updated version was approved by the Food System Committee on July 11th and is recommended to Council for adoption at your July 25th Council meeting. A resolution to confirm adoption of the plan is attached for Council's consideration.

After the April 25th Public Works and Health Committee Meeting, Councilmember Elenbaas invited leaders from the export farming community to meet and provide specific input and edits on the Food System Plan. Committee staff person (Ali Jensen) and Committee Chair (Riley Sweeney) met with Whatcom Farm Bureau President (Troy Lenssen) and Whatcom Family Farmers Executive Director (Fred Likkel), as well as the Export Farmer representative from the Food System Committee (Rob Dhaliwal) and the Food System Committee's fishing representative (Paul Burrill, who is also an Ex-Officio Board member of Whatcom Family Farmers) on the afternoon of May 10th. The group reviewed key points of friction on the plan and initial comments submitted by the Whatcom Farm Bureau and Whatcom Family Farmers. The group discussed potential edits to the Food System Plan for the Food System Committee to consider.

Staff compiled a comprehensive document that included the suggested edits, which were affirmed by the participants of that meeting. The edits were presented individually to the Food System Committee for

discussion and consideration at the May 23rd, June 27th, and July 11th Food System Committee meetings. Members of Whatcom Family Farmers and the Whatcom Farm Bureau attended those meetings and participated in those discussions. A list of adopted edits by the committee can be found in this agenda packet and are reflected in the updated version of the Food System Plan in the Council packet.

The Food System Plan was created with years of committee efforts, months of community input, subject matter expert interviews, and feedback from the community. The final plan outlines goals, objectives, and actions that will lead to a healthier food system in Whatcom County. Each action in the plan is identified by five key categories: policy solutions, community collaborations, county leadership, infrastructure, and education and programming. These categories are intended to identify a mechanism of action and identify who will be involved in implementation.

Implementing the Food System Plan will take continued commitment of the county and the community. The plan will be administered by Whatcom County Health and Community Services, with oversight by the Food System Committee and support from the community. After Council adoption, the Food System Committee will work with staff and community to develop an implementation plan, determine food system indicators to track progress, and bring project updates and funding requests to the County Council as needed.

Please call Ali Jensen at (360) 778-6121 if there are any questions. Thank you.