

March 2013 Johnson County Food Policy Council Food Policy Recommendations for the Board of Supervisors

The Johnson County Food Policy Council has created a draft policy plan for review by the Board of Supervisors per the recommendation in the charter from the board.

This set of policy proposals has been developed through research by the council and by individual council member's area of expertise in the food community in Johnson County. Council members interviewed farmers, chefs, agencies serving low income populations and institutional buyers. Our intentions are to start a dialogue and to continue to work with the Board to refine and adopt strategies regarding these recommendations. The three areas of policy need we have identified are 1) removing obstacles for local food advancement in the county 2) Local food promotion ideas 3) possible additions to the land use plan to promote the advancement of local food in the county.

Removing Obstacles:

To assist in the preservation of agricultural land, protection of farming activities (as stated in land use plan) and to encourage the growth of agricultural and farming activities in Johnson County we propose the following:

1. Encourage agri-tourism and acknowledge the benefit of agricultural experience as a legitimate farming activity.
2. Examine & address barriers for events on farms.
3. Allow the value-added processing of ag products on and between farms.
4. Implement a right to farm policy to protect farms from urban conflicts.

Local Food Promotion:

The Johnson County Board of Supervisors should promote local food in the following ways:

- Johnson County shall strive to purchase, by or through its food service contractor, locally produced food when a department of Johnson County serves food in the usual course of business.
- In order to understand how much the County is spending on local food currently, we propose that Johnson County track local food expenses purchased with county dollars (entire county budget) as a percentage of the total food budget & research & identify foods that can be purchased locally.
- Establish a minimum goal for local food purchases for the County
- Support small farms & market vendors with contracts to increase local food content within county food service.
- Promote Johnson County by promoting the research and development of a local food label and marketing materials.
- Increase education about local food within social services.

Land Use: Recommendations in [RED]

1. 2008 Johnson County Land Use Plan - Page 14

Specific Area Development Policies

The following policies shall apply to the specific areas previously defined and designated on the accompanying map.

1. Agricultural/Rural

- 1.1 Support farmers who wish to maintain and expand agricultural activities in accordance with County and State regulations.

- . 1.2 Discourage non-farm development on agricultural land.
- . 1.3 Promote and protect agriculture as the primary use of land in rural Johnson County in areas identified to be agricultural on the Johnson County Land Use Map.
- 1.4 [Support sustainable farming and value-added agricultural initiatives]

2. 2008 Johnson County Land Use Plan - Page 18

ENVIRONMENTAL

Policies:

1. Protect the environmental quality and natural resources of the County such as woodlands, wooded ridgelines and forested areas by reducing forest fragmentation and destruction of natural habitat for wildlife and plants. Preserve and protect significant features, such as prairie remnants, wetlands, streams and creeks and steep slopes as defined by the Sensitive Areas Ordinance, as well as drainage areas, creek beds, and other highly erosive lands.
2. Protect Johnson County water quality.
2.5 [Protect Johnson County soil quality.]
3. Protect archaeological sites, artifacts, and features such as burial mounds.
4. Provide for diversity, and stability of natural resources.
5. Encourage alternative, non-carbon based energy generation.

3. 2008 Johnson County Land Use Plan – Page 20

AGRICULTURAL/RURAL Policies:

- . Preserve agricultural land.
 - . Protect farming activities from non-agricultural encroachment.
- Strategies:
1. Report annually the amount of agricultural land that is converted to other land uses.
 2. Promote the use of conservation easements to secure land set aside for agriculture, open space or environmentally sensitive areas.
 3. Discourage non-farm development on areas identified on the Land Use Map as agricultural.
 4. Evaluate farmstead splits on an annual basis.
 5. [Encourage locally grown farm products by allowing activities such as farmers' markets, agri-tourism and similar activities]

4. 2008 Johnson County Land Use Plan - Page 25

Parks & Open Space Policies:

1. Identify and address the recreation needs of a growing population.
2. Reserve open space in locations well suited to serve the public and private interests.
3. Encourage development of a trail system connecting public parks and open spaces.
4. Provide visual corridors of open space along major transportation routes.
5. [Reserve open public space for the production of food & edible landscaping.]