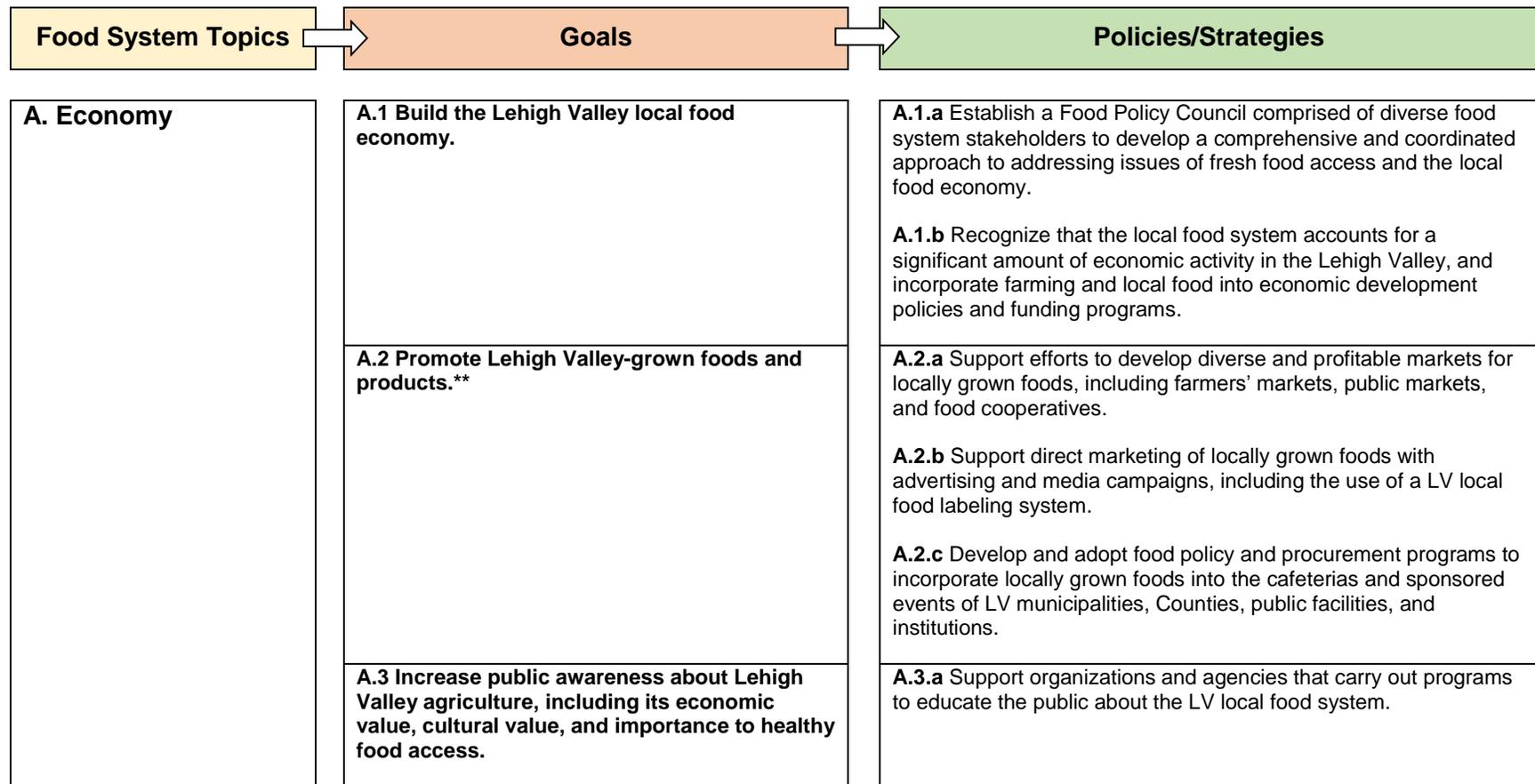


# Fresh Food Access Plan

## ***Vision Statement:***

The Lehigh Valley is committed to a healthy, sustainable local food system that recognizes and strengthens the interdependent relationships between individual food sectors (from production to waste disposal) while improving access to nutritious, fresh foods for all residents, promoting health, protecting our agricultural assets and natural resources, supporting our local farmers, and contributing to the economic well-being of this region.



<b>B. Production</b>	<b>B.1 Preserve agricultural land.**</b>	<p><b>B.1.a</b> Continue to protect farmland from development by supporting agricultural conservation easement programs with both funding and political support.</p> <p><b>B.1.b</b> Enact Agricultural Zoning to limit the density of development and restrict nonfarm uses of farmland. Limit non-agricultural development in these zones to residential and accessory uses compatible with agricultural production.</p>
	<b>B.2 Increase the agricultural land base.</b>	<p><b>B.2.a</b> Explore a mix of incentives and guidelines for non-farming landowners (both private and public) to encourage leasing of all or part of their land to farmers for food production.</p> <p><b>B.2.b</b> Modify zoning regulations to accommodate urban agricultural production and sales.</p>
	<b>B.3 Support local farmers.</b>	<p><b>B.3.a</b> Assist farmers with the development, diversification, and marketing of Lehigh Valley sustainable agricultural products.</p> <p><b>B.3.b</b> Assist farmers to overcome the challenges of land access and affordability by identifying additional land available for agriculture, linking land owners and farmers, offering incentives to land owners for selling or leasing land to farmers; and offering competitive small grants to farmers.</p> <p><b>B.3.c</b> Maintain affordable land for farmers through a range of innovative programs, including developing a land bank and identifying opportunities to transition preserved land into food production.</p> <p><b>B.3.d</b> Support organizations and entities that provide farmer training and education, including education about resiliency to climate change.</p>
	<b>B.4 Support ecologically sustainable food production practices and promote organic certification.</b>	<p><b>B.4.a</b> Develop incentives to encourage farmers to transition from conventional farming practices to organic, sustainable practices.</p>
<b>C. Infrastructure</b>	<b>C.1 Improve local food system infrastructure.</b>	<p><b>C.1.a</b> Support the development of a kitchen incubator facility.</p> <p><b>C.1.b</b> Support the creation of food infrastructure, particularly a food hub, and food-related jobs in production, processing, storage, distribution, and waste management.</p>

		<p><b>C.1.c</b> Develop options and incentives to encourage new local food enterprises.</p> <p><b>C.1.d</b> Encourage processing of locally grown foods to support local food security and strengthen the Lehigh Valley local food economy.</p> <p><b>C.1.e</b> Establish an alliance of institutional buyers.</p> <p><b>C.1.f</b> Educate institutional buyers about the health and climate aspects of sustainably raised locally grown food. Encourage them to offer more organic and local food options.</p>
<b>D. Waste</b>	<b>D.1 Facilitate the reduction, reuse, or recycling of food-related waste.</b>	<p><b>D.1.a</b> Promote food-waste composting, both residential and commercial.</p> <p><b>D.1.b</b> Ensure zoning doesn't restrict residential composting.</p> <p><b>D.1.c</b> Develop programs for edible food waste recovery.</p>
<b>E. Climate Change</b>	<b>E.1 Reduce the impact of the food system on climate change.</b>	<p><b>E.1.a</b> Promote climate-smart, sustainable agricultural practices.</p> <p><b>E.1.b</b> Reduce and/or remove greenhouse gas emissions.</p>
	<b>E.2 Build resilience to climate change.</b>	<b>E.2.a</b> Partner with the state Department of Agriculture and LV parties that are working in the area of climate change to review available data, determine data gaps, research climate-smart agricultural approaches, suggest adaptations, and provide community education in order to create a local food system that will thrive in the face of climate change challenges.
<b>F. Access</b>	<b>F.1 Improve fresh food access.</b>	<p><b>F.1.a</b> Support local food production on urban and suburban lands.</p> <p><b>F.1.b</b> Encourage organic, sustainable home, school, and community gardens.</p> <p><b>F.1.c</b> Require space for on-site community gardens in new residential developments of 10 units or more.</p> <p><b>F.1.d</b> Promote Edible Landscaping. Encourage fruit trees or other edible landscaping when possible in new developments and when renewing planting on county property where appropriate. Include the replacement of irrigated ornamentals with drought-resistant edible plants.</p>

		<p><b>F.1.e</b> Support school programs, including on-site gardens that incorporate local foods into school meals.</p> <p><b>F.1.f</b> Support local groups that provide public education and forums addressing the Lehigh Valley local food economy.</p> <p><b>F.1.g</b> Promote and expand alternative food resources, such as farmers' markets, CSAs, Farm Share programs, mobile markets, and food cooperatives, and educate consumers about their locations.</p> <p><b>F.1.h</b> Allow a limited number of smaller farm animals on residential lots with standards that will minimize impact on neighborhood properties.</p> <p><b>F.1.i</b> Connect transportation services and land use planning with food access.</p> <p><b>F.1.j</b> Develop programs to increase the ability of shoppers to use electronic forms of payment at farmers' markets and farm stands.</p> <p><b>F.1.k</b> Establish an incentive program for using SNAP benefits to purchase locally grown produce.</p> <p><b>F.1.l</b> Increase the number of neighborhood-based stores selling fresh produce and other healthy food items.</p> <p><b>F.1.m</b> Improve public transportation and walkability to increase access to food.</p>
<p><b>G. Healthy Eating</b></p>	<p><b>G.1 Promote healthy food choices at the individual level.</b></p>	<p><b>G.1.a</b> Promote public awareness and education about the importance of locally produced food.</p> <p><b>G.1.b</b> Develop a targeted marketing campaign to encourage healthy eating.</p> <p><b>G.1.c</b> Promote agricultural education in schools.</p> <p><b>G.1.d</b> Provide healthy food options at municipal and county buildings and events.</p> <p><b>G.1.e</b> Develop wellness policies to create healthy food environments where people work.</p>

\*\*Following the publication of *Assessment Report: Lehigh Valley Local Food Economy*, food forums were held in five different locations in the Lehigh Valley as well as online. During these forums, attendees were asked to rank four categories in terms of importance: Land; Farmers & Sustainable Production; Infrastructure; and Consumers & Healthy Retail. Land was ranked most important to attendees, followed by Consumers & Healthy Retail.

Attendees were also asked to discuss and rate various strategies in terms of importance in each of the four categories. Responses indicated that it was most important to “Promote the consumption of fresh, locally grown foods” (3.7/4.0) and “Preserve rural agricultural land” (3.6/4.0).

A total of 87 completed surveys were collected. The survey and compiled results are attached.