

# FOOD POLICY SURVEY RESPONSES

## Mayoral Candidates

### **Q1: What do you see as the greatest challenges and opportunities for the Mayor to address in Portland's food system?**

**Michael F. Brennan:** Shortly after I was elected Mayor, with the support of the City Council I convened the Mayor's Initiative for a Healthy and Sustainable Food System. As stated on the Mayor's Initiative website, the goals are:

- \* Provide continued and increased public engagement in food-related policies and initiatives;
- \* Identify and implement positive changes in the community's food systems and policies;
- \* Prioritize and respond to City and community identified needs for food system change and improvement;
- \* and Increase access to healthier food for residents.

**Tom MacMillan:** The greatest challenge is that many Portland residents do not have the economic ability to purchase healthy and local foods. For that reason, I am supporting raising the minimum wage to a living wage, so that families are better able to make conscious and healthy choices.

The greatest opportunity is the growth of community gardens and the renewed interest in local agriculture in the past several years. As Mayor, I will work to expand gardens to as many publicly owned spaces as possible, and work with the school department to get children growing their own foods at school.

**Ethan Strimling:** Some of the challenges are food service workers making a livable wage and hunger and food security problems. Both impact the school system and our lowest income residents. In regard to opportunities, there are tremendous job opportunities in the Portland area in regard to exports and building bridges to the rural community. We need to create a larger market for these opportunities, which will create jobs and build networks.

## **Q2: What role can Portland play in supporting the farm, fish, and food economy in Cumberland County and throughout Maine?**

***Michael F. Brennan:*** Portland can play a critical role in promoting our local farm, fish, and food economy and directly supporting it. Part of this is procurement policies that prioritize locally sourced food, including our groundfish industry, which has been struggling for years and is in need of a stimulus.

***Tom MacMillan:*** We can continue to expand upon the sourcing of locally produced foods, as we have begun to do in Portland Schools. As the largest city in the state, we can lead by example and do much more facilitate the private purchase of locally produced goods including working with community partners in the non-profit and for profit sectors to make stronger connections between local farmers and Portland residents.

***Ethan Strimling:*** Provide can invest in infrastructure opportunities on the waterfront, including the cold storage facility. In our own facilities, including our schools and the Barron Center, we can buy more local. Not much ground fish left, but we still have lobster and we need to maximize/manage the resource locally.

### **Q3: Maine has the third highest rate of hunger in the nation. What do you believe is the Mayor's role in addressing hunger/food insecurity in Portland?**

**Michael F. Brennan:** The Mayor's Initiative website says it best: "Food is a shared need and an opportunity to bring together everyone in our community."

Food insecurity is a moral social justice issue. This is why we are working to fight hunger through this initiative and through initiatives such as the Summer feeding program for students, which has nearly doubled in the last five years.

Last week, representatives from the Mayor's Initiative presented testimony on behalf of the initiative in Augusta in opposition to the LePage Administration's proposal to require asset testing, which is just another way to deny food assistance to those who need it.

This is also why I supported increasing Portland's minimum wage, to give workers more income to afford basic necessities.

**Tom MacMillan:** I believe that the Mayor's role is to ensure that all Portland residents have enough to feed themselves and their families. I believe that raising the minimum wage to one where people can sustain themselves, and putting in place safeguards that protect tenants from being ejected from their homes and at-risk of losing deposits, will address the issue of hunger, because families will not be constantly in fear of how they will survive until their next paycheck and of where they are going to live.

**Ethan Strimling:** Perhaps it would be most illustrative of how I see the Mayor's role in solving these problem by describing what we did at LearningWorks. At LearningWorks we understand that hunger and food insecurity must be addressed before basic learning can begin. To that end, we decided to create a culinary arts program in which students learned to cook for themselves from food that they could grow in a community garden. This built self-sufficiency, ensured nutrition needs were met, and provided a hands-on learning opportunity where skills such as math, reading, and creativity could be learned. We also have immigrants and refugees selling food that they have grown from our driveway. These are just a couple of examples, and as Mayor I will look for creative initiatives like these. However, it will also be my job to use the pulpit to call out the problems and generate community support.

#### **Q4: What is the Mayor's role in supporting more local food in Portland's public schools and City-run institutions?**

**Michael F. Brennan:** We are trying to align procurement policies that enable us to purchase food locally. Our goal is to have at least 50 percent of food served in Portland's public schools and city-run institutions be locally sourced within the next two years.

**Tom MacMillan:** Public spaces, especially ones that are underutilized, should be turned into gardens that can provide foods to our public schools and city offices. I will convene a task-force to consider the creation of an edible forest in one or more of our public parks.

We should dedicate more of our budget to food in our schools, so that we can purchase from local farmers, and prioritize getting healthy, local foods on childrens' plates.

**Ethan Strimling:** First I must make it a priority for the Council and work with the school board to feel the same. From there, we can set goals together and hold our systems accountable to those expectations.

**Q5: One-third of Maine's food manufacturing occurs in Greater Portland, but in the past decade the number of jobs in the sector has fallen 15 percent, from about 2,100 to 1,800. What is the Mayor's role in boosting food manufacturing jobs in Portland?**

***Michael F. Brennan:*** We have just secured funds to do a study to look at food production within the City of Portland, and are looking to identify sound strategies to both grow this sector and to train a skilled workforce to staff it.

***Tom MacMillan:*** To offset the loss of jobs in the food manufacturing sector, the city can provide entrepreneurial grants to those who are seeking home-based or small scale food manufacturing businesses. We can also help provide seed money and training to residents who wish to create cooperative businesses, which are known to pay higher wages and provide more benefits to the community.

***Ethan Strimling:*** We have lost a lot of jobs in the industry over the past few years. We need to prioritize bringing in new businesses to help rebuild our food structure. I will work with those in the industry to help them grow and will seek new businesses to come to Portland.

**Q6: How can the Mayor support a Portland Food Policy Council? (A Food Policy Council brings together City government, the public, and the private farm, fish, and food sector to forward a robust food economy in Portland and to address policy affecting Portland's food system.)**

**Michael F. Brennan:** I strongly support the creation of a Food Policy Council, as it is a natural outgrowth of the Mayor's Initiative. It would be rooted in the community and continue the work of the Mayor's Initiative, guaranteeing continuity over time. I am actively working with members of the Mayor's Initiative and have secured legal resources to investigate how to best create a Food Policy Council within the next few months. This Council would provide crucial institutional support over time.

**Tom MacMillan:** The Mayor can work to provide city staff as a resource for the Food Policy Council, as well as prioritize his participation in the council. Food justice should be considered just as, if not more, important than other issues facing our city. We need more families who have lived with food insecurity to be involved in such a council, and the city can facilitate this by providing a stipend to low-income people so that they can participate.

**Ethan Strimling:** I will be very interested in working with the Food Council. However, I would need to talk more with you to understand more deeply your needs. What have been the successes and failures of the current initiative? How has the Mayor's office been helpful and how has it come up short? What are the short- and long-term goals?

**Q7: As Mayor, what would you like to know about food system issues in Portland?**

***Michael F. Brennan:*** I am always looking to listen and learn about food system issues. As Mayor, I always want to learn about how we can better promote local food, local jobs, and combat food insecurity. I am ready and willing to meet with anyone who wants to work on these important issues.

***Tom MacMillan:*** I would like to know how we can facilitate greater public involvement in food security. I would like to hear more from people who are dealing hunger. I would like to hear from local farmers and fishermen on how they envision their involvement with the city.

***Ethan Strimling:*** As much as you can tell me. My job as Mayor will be to listen to and incorporate the ideas of those who are smartest in their various fields. I will rely on you for these insights. I am looking forward to meeting with you during this campaign and then regularly, if I am elected Mayor.

## City Council Candidates

### **Q1: What do you see as the greatest challenges and opportunities for the City Council to address in Portland's food system?**

#### District 1

**Paula M. Guillemette Agopian:** Challenges would be to encourage independent food providers/industry to support local food producers/manufacturers than they already do and to make local food more accessible to people on state and federal programs along with education in nutrition and food preparation. Opportunities could present themselves in the mandating of providers funded with public funds to use more locally produced and manufactured foods. Using less processed foods from elsewhere.

**Patrick Flynn:** Did not respond.

**Sean Kerwin:** The greatest challenge/opportunity lies in connecting the players. We have knowledgeable farmers, a broad array of distribution networks, and a restaurant scene that is the envy of most other cities large and small. We have the ability to produce food, the ability to distribute food, and the ability to prepare food. When that system is well integrated and efficient, the food economy should thrive and there is no reason for anyone in Southern Maine to go hungry or be food insecure.

**Brandon Mazer:** I think the Council's greatest food challenge is to develop a food policy that integrates the many needs of our diverse city. The Council has to work to balance the needs of the food insecure, consumers and food producers to foster an environment that is affordable, productive and effective for all. As District 1's City Councilor, I'd fight to make sure that the Council expands access to locally produced food for the food insecure.

**Belinda Ray:** As the city struggles to find sufficient revenues to fulfill its numerous obligations, the greatest challenge in terms of food policy will be in finding money with which to fund programs or offer financial incentives to encourage Portland's citizens to participate in composting, gardening, or educational opportunities around sustainable food systems.

That said, we are quite fortunate in that we have the knowledge and the ability to create good policy around food systems and food security, thanks in no small part to the coalition of folks such as those involved in the Mayor's Initiative for Healthy Sustainable Food Systems. And though it sometimes may seem that we are running out of space in our city, we do, in fact, have numerous locations that could support urban agriculture. We also appear to have a critical mass of people who believe in the importance of creating sustainable food systems, improving food security, and finding ways to increase local food production, so ultimately, I think our opportunities outweigh our challenges.

Over the next few years, it will be important for the City Council to work with local food system experts and enthusiasts and examine best practices in other cities of similar sizes in order to institute policies and procedures that will help to improve and protect our food system.

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## District 2

**Robert B. Korobkin:** Opportunities:

An educated populace with conscientious, earth-friendly values

Close proximity to farmland

Well-established farmers markets, food cooperatives and farm-to-table restaurants.

Challenges:

Low income residents lacking funds to buy ethical, sustainable food, let alone basic groceries.

Permitting and zoning challenges to starting new businesses in the city.

**Wellington M. Lyons:** My ideas on local food policy are influenced largely by the writings of Mark Bittman and Michael Pollan. I think that many of the challenges we face as a city with regards to food are challenges we face all over the nation: food insecurity, diet related chronic disease, a disconnect in understanding where our food comes from and how it is produced, low pay for farm workers, food processing workers and restaurant workers, and so many others. I think we have tremendous opportunities ahead to bring together various constituencies to tackle these problems in a unified way – by bringing together public health, environmental, educational and economic leaders, and building off of policies that have worked in the past. Our farmers’ markets are some of the best in the world, and our token system has enhanced their accessibility. We should be promoting our farmers’ markets and finding ways to use them as a natural jumping off point for education around healthy eating, environmental sustainability, and crop diversity.

**Spencer R. Thibodeau:** I believe that there is significant work left to be done at the municipal level to ensure that Portland’s food system is strong and equitable for all Portland families.

I am encouraged by the progress made on the issue through the Mayor’s Initiative for a Healthy and Sustainable Food System. It is the recommendations from the Community Food Forum in April 2012 that I believe provide an appropriate guiding framework for how our City should allocate its limited resources to address food-related issues.

The key outstanding recommendations from this forum and subsequent discussions that I believe the Council must prioritize are: adopting zoning and development regulations that provide more flexibility for food production and are responsive to those doing the valuable work of producing and providing locally grown food (whether this means community gardens, farmers’ markets, urban agriculture, beekeeping, etc.); working with the City to develop additional public outreach materials about nutrition and food assistance programs; and exploring the option of providing incentives for healthful retail food outlets to locate their business in underserved areas. This is not an exhaustive list, to be sure, but these are the top three priorities in my opinion.

The key challenges standing in the way of making progress on these issues are limited resources (both fiscally and in terms of time at meetings) that can be truly dedicated to food issues, an education gap for many Portland residents who are unaware of the serious food issues that face the underserved populations of our City, and the inherent complexity of grappling with issues as intersectional as those concerning food policy often are.

Despite these challenges, I do believe that there are significant opportunities to make progress on the key recommendations outlined above. As a Councilor, I would leverage the resources and connections

at my disposal to make change on these issues. One key area where I believe there are opportunities is engaging youth on this issue. High schools and colleges provide fertile ground (so to speak) for these issues to be engaged, and often our youth are the ones most directly affected by food insecurity. This could mean jumpstarting community garden programs at high schools while students learn more about local ecological issues, engaging the Muskie School at USM in a policy analysis of the programs that Portland offers, or simply exposing young people to the issue by encouraging volunteerism at one of Portland's food pantries.

Another key opportunity is simply the fact that the Mayor convened the initiative around this issue and that discussions about how to address the recommendations are ongoing. If elected, I would jump into these conversations and engage with these issues – both because I am personally interested in food issues, and because these are issues that would directly affect my constituents.

One final opportunity is that there is a lot of creative innovation and thinking happening all around the State on these issues that we could learn from. For example, Stonyvale Farm in Exeter introduced an anaerobic digester system on its farm that processes the manure created by farm animals and converts it to electricity, providing enough power for 800 homes on a continual basis. Stonyvale then sells this electricity through a fixed-rate power contract. A solution like this is not only environmentally conscious and beneficial to the local economy, but it also generated additional earned revenue for Stonyvale, leading to increased financial sustainability. This is just one example, but there are surely many others out there that could be applicable to Portland.

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### At-Large

***Matthew W. Coffey:*** Did not respond.

***David S. Foster:*** I don't know very much about Portland's food system. I am currently reading *The Third Plate* by Dan Barber in order to educate myself in food and farming policy. Without knowing much I would say that a challenge is getting the poorer citizens of our city fed organically produced food, and an opportunity would be to showcase such organizations like the Portland Food Coop.

***Nicholas M. Mavodones:*** Did not respond.

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## **Q2: What role can Portland play in supporting the farm, fish, and food economy in Cumberland County and throughout Maine?**

### **District 1**

**Paula M. Guillemette Agopian:** The council can help form partnerships with local growers, fisherman and the local poultry, dairy and cattle industries to help them market their products on a state and national level.

**Patrick Flynn:** Did not respond.

**Sean Kerwin:** Ensuring that the farmers' market has the space and support it needs to thrive; favoring buy local policies in city run institutions; supporting our community gardens; ensuring that systems are in place to provide food to those who cannot access it otherwise, particularly children. To these ends I would support a Food Policy Council with participation from the City Council.

**Brandon Mazer:** Portland needs to act as a leader in providing access to the local food economy. By promoting existing fishing, farming and manufacturing, building new opportunities for local food production and making food accessible and affordable for all, Portland can lead the state by example.

**Belinda Ray:** Portland is already playing a great role via groups like Cultivating Community, The Portland Food Co-op, and the Farm and Sea Cooperative. I've been involved with two of these three organizations (the first two) and have been continually impressed with the commitment of their leaders and members to both increase people's access to fresh, local food and to improve people's overall understanding of the connections between agriculture, aquaculture, permaculture and the food that makes its way to their grocery stores, kitchens, and tables.

The regular Farmers' Markets in Portland also help to increase people's awareness of the local food economy and the importance—and beauty—of fresh local food.

Portland can continue to be a role model for Cumberland County and the rest of the state by working to ensure the continuation of the programs and organizations that are already in existence; instituting policies to encourage and enable more people to become participants in the sustainable food system by gardening, composting, and using vermiculture; working to encourage public institutions such as City Hall, community and state college systems, and the Portland Public Schools—and private institutions such as hospitals, nursing homes, and large businesses with employee cafeterias—to purchase as much of their food goods as possible from local sources; ensuring that our working waterfront continues to have adequate space dedicated to marine and fishing related food industries; researching and implementing best practices that have been instituted and proven effective in other communities.

Specific policy initiatives the City Council could explore include:

1. Supporting and expanding upon the Mayor's goal that 50% of food eaten in Portland's Schools be from within Maine by 2016 by passing a resolution along the lines of the goal set by the "Maine Food for the UMaine System" group. They are calling for 20% of the food in the University System to come from within Maine by 2020, and it seems that we could set a similar goal for not just our public

schools but other public institutions as well. The Mayor has already set a goal for the public schools, but we could certainly apply such a goal across a broader spectrum and tweak the numbers (% and date) in order to make sure this goal is both challenging and attainable.

2. Ensuring that local ordinances allow for initiatives such as goat mowing or perhaps chicken tractors to help mow and fertilize arable land.

3. Banning pesticides or other harmful chemicals in specific areas to ensure that toxins do not find their way into our food system through our soil or waterways.

4. Easing height restrictions for buildings with rooftops that could potentially accommodate greenhouses or hoopouses for rooftop gardens. In other words, if a building is already at its maximum height for a specific zone, we may consider making an exception to allow the owner to add a structure that would make rooftop gardening a feasible option.

5. Help to orchestrate a policy of creating and maintaining plantings in medians to support pollinator populations.

6. Researching the possibility of allowing both beekeeping and the raising of small livestock (goats, pigs, sheep) within the city and proposing ordinances to regulate these activities.

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## **District 2**

***Robert B. Korobkin:*** Fund and support the development of online technology to serve Maine's local agricultural, fishing and sustainable food processing economy.

City-sponsored education and community gardening initiatives to get residents informed about and engaged in sustainable food practices.

The creation and further development of financial efforts to invest in the local food economy, such as Slow Money Maine and No Small Potatoes.

Support and promotion of trailblazing efforts to bring local food into Portland's neighborhoods, public school cafeterias and soup kitchens. Portland may be a relatively small city, but our initiatives can, and do, inspire the rest of the state and even the entire U.S.

***Wellington M. Lyons:*** We can promote our reputation not just as a place to come to eat and drink, but as a place where some of the world's best food is grown. We're known for lobster, betting our reputation on a mono crop that is quickly migrating northward is not a good long term proposition. I grew up on a small sheep and chicken farm in North Yarmouth, and showed our sheep at the Cumberland Fair. We should be promoting more collaboration between award winning chefs and award winning local farms to build our city's reputation as a global food destination.

***Spencer R. Thibodeau:*** As a city that employs many in the service sector, Portland can continue to implement policies that make Portland attractive to new restaurants, especially those boasting farm to

table policies. The Council should also continue to project Portland's working waterfront as an essential tool to provide fresh food to our City.

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**At-Large**

***Matthew W. Coffey:*** Did not respond.

***David S. Foster:*** Sustainability and polyculture farming leads to better tasting and healthier food. Portland already has a bustling restaurant community. We should continue to respect the land and the waters that provide our sustenance, and push forward to support food production that keeps in line with these practices.

***Nicholas M. Mavodones:*** Did not respond.

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### **Q3: Maine has the third highest rate of hunger in the nation. What do you believe is the City Council's role in addressing hunger/food insecurity in Portland?**

#### **District 1**

**Paula M. Guillemette Agopian:** Offering weekend meals to children, teens, and seniors in our local schools. But also have the recipients play an active, hands on roll in the process. Thus creating and fostering connections within the community while learning about nutrition and food preparation. (new skills)

**Patrick Flynn:** Did not respond.

**Sean Kerwin:** There is no reason for anyone to be hungry in Portland. We have the food; the issue is distribution and access. Our schools (all city institutions for that matter) should provide access to healthy meal options for all students who wish to partake. Much of the work of getting food to people who are food insecure is handled by private not-for-profit entities. However, the city can support those efforts by helping to publicize events and programs, by allowing the use of public parks and facilities for farmers markets, supporting community gardens, and participating in a Food Policy Council.

**Brandon Mazer:** Nobody in Portland should ever go hungry, and I believe the City Council has a prime opportunity to prevent hunger in our city. We're lucky to live in a city with such incredible local produce and with community leaders who are dedicated to solving our hunger crisis. The Council should work with residents, the business community, and programs like The Locker Project and Full Plates Full Potential to end hunger in Portland.

**Belinda Ray:** Again, there are already some great programs in place. ConnectEd's Summer Meals Programs, discounted farm shares offered through Cultivating Community, community garden plots at various locations that enable people to grow their own food—some of which even offer help in the form of free seeds, seedlings, compost, and access to tools. Obviously, we still need to do more, but I do want to emphasize that I think we are on the right track and moving in the right direction.

In terms of specific things the City Council can do to help address hunger and food insecurity in Portland, I believe the City Council should:

1. Continue to seek input from stakeholders, as the Mayor has done through his initiative.
2. Help to support the creation of a Food Policy Council or Commission on Food Security that could work to evaluate city policies relating to food access, food security, and nutrition.
3. Evaluate the recommendations of this group in order to institute policies and regulations to improve food access, security, and nutrition in Portland.

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#### **District 2**

**Robert B. Korobkin:** Living wages - Every working person should earn enough to afford to put healthy food on the table for their family without worry. Period.

Better community infrastructure - As I've walked around the district in the last few months, I've met thousands of people who don't live with their nuclear family and frequently eat their meals by themselves, often spending more and making less healthy choices than they might if they were sitting down to dinner with a family. The more the City can do to bring folks together to share food with each other, the easier it will be for people to eat healthy. Nobody goes hungry at a potluck.

Adequate, accessible public support without stigma - There is an enormous amount of food in our society. Nobody should ever be made to feel scared or ashamed to get healthy food for themselves and their families just because they've fallen on hard times.

Community gardening \ local food production. The more that local communities are engaged in growing their own food, the more stable their food supply is. The City should take an active role in supporting groups like Cultivating Community, the New American Sustainable Agriculture Project and Lots to Gardens that offer lower income people the opportunity to take an active role in producing their own food.

**Wellington M. Lyons:** No person in Portland should ever go hungry. I support financial assistance to our soup kitchens and food banks, as well as free and reduced lunches year round. I'll be a public advocate for fighting against food insecurity. If we're to look at the causes of food insecurity, the factors at work are often low wages. I'm happy that the council recently voted to increase the minimum wage, and support statewide efforts to raise the wage to \$12 an hour.

**Spencer R. Thibodeau:** The City Council could work to create more community garden programs in schools and communities, or even provide small "seed" stipends for individuals experiencing food insecurity to start their own garden plots. In addition, the Council should work with the City to increase education on this issue among all Portland residents, regardless of race, age, or socioeconomic status. The City Council, as part of the budgeting process, has a duty to ensure Portland students have access to food while at school, continuing to fund reduced and free lunch programs. Evidence shows that students who do not worry about food insecurity perform better in the classroom. This is a smart investment on the City's part.

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### **At-Large**

**Matthew W. Coffey:** Did not respond.

**David S. Foster:** Everyone should be fed. There is no reason why anyone should go hungry in this city which has so much.

**Nicholas M. Mavodones:** Did not respond.

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## **Q4: What is the City Council's role in supporting more local food in Portland's public schools and City-run institutions?**

### **District 1**

**Paula M. Guillemette Agopian:** The ability to mandate a % of locally and state produced and manufactured goods used in production. From paper products to vegetables, meat, fish, bread, dairy etc.

**Patrick Flynn:** Did not respond.

**Sean Kerwin:** There should be a presumptive preference for local sourcing of food products in city institutions whenever practicable.

**Brandon Mazer:** It is critical that the Council recognize the key role that local food plays in our economy. If we have the opportunity to provide our students with healthy, varied, and cost-effective meals while supporting the local economy, it is imperative that we take it. As District 1's City Councilor, I'll work with the Council and School Board to make sure that we provide as much local food as possible in school lunches.

**Belinda Ray:** I believe it would be wise of the City Council to encourage our public schools and City-run institutions to incorporate more local food, perhaps by adapting and expanding upon the Mayor's challenge to have 50% of the food in schools coming from within Maine by 2016. We could set a goal and/or adopt a resolution, tweaking the numbers (40% by 2017? 50% by 2020?) in order to make sure this goal is both challenging and attainable for Portland.

Of course, in the process of adopting any of these resolutions, it will be essential to work collaboratively with teachers, administrators, staff and—most importantly—the students and young people who will not only be the primary beneficiaries of such policies, but who can also contribute ideas, act as agents of change, help to increase public engagement and buy-in, and become decision makers in the process as we move the city forward.

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### **District 2**

**Robert B. Korobkin:** The City of Portland is by far the largest institution in the city in terms of both employees and expenditures as well as the largest municipal government in northern New England. It is our duty as civic leaders to set a powerful example of what it means to be a responsible employer and community steward, and ensuring access to healthy food in all of our institutions, especially our schools, is an essential component of what that responsibility looks like in practice.

Our cafeterias must offer healthy, affordable, local food to all students, teachers and school staff and should do so in a way that kids actually like, including making efforts to provide dishes from the students' different cultures.

Academically, schools should work across curriculums to engage kids in learning about sustainable food systems, including units in History and Biology, hands-on training in cooking and gardening and experiential field trips to local farms and fishing companies.

**Wellington M. Lyons:** Let's find ways to collaborate more on the farm-to-school movement. I'd like to see us bring local eggs to our cafeterias and let students see and taste the difference of a bright orange yolk compared to liquid egg product. I'd like to see students growing their own kale and learning what makes the different varieties unique. And I'll support Portland seeking grant opportunities to fund such programming, like the one from the Centers for Disease Control that funds our local foods specialist at the Portland Public Schools' central kitchen. We need to get more students eating our school prepared meals to break even with our costs; promoting our local ingredients could be a good way to get more parents to encourage their children to eat healthy school lunches.

**Spencer R. Thibodeau:** Anecdotally, I have talked with many students in public schools across Portland who have said that the food options have gotten much healthier over the past few years. That said, I believe we can always do more to encourage healthful and locally grown food to be provided in City-run institutions and schools, and we could perhaps look into public-private partnerships that would stimulate and help subsidize local farming to accomplish this purpose.

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### **At-Large**

**Matthew W. Coffey:** Did not respond.

**David S. Foster:** There should be as much local food in our schools and public offices as possible. Our industrialized NPK society has done much damage to our youth and the general public that is not easily pinpointed, because of the tendency of our values to be based on quantity over quality. What a lot of us don't realize is that we have unbalanced a delicate system, and now need to do much more work to bring back equilibrium.

**Nicholas M. Mavodones:** Did not respond.

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**Q5: One-third of Maine's food manufacturing occurs in Greater Portland, but in the past decade the number of jobs in the sector has fallen 15 percent, from about 2,100 to 1,800. What is the City Council's role in boosting food manufacturing jobs in Portland?**

### **District 1**

***Paula M. Guillemette Agopian:*** Meet with manufacturers and find out why. Is it due to automation, drop in demand? Perhaps help with marketing, i.e. Food Fairs or purchasing their products for entities funded with taxpayers dollars i.e. schools, The Barron Center. Working with large employers i.e. MMC, UNUM that provide food services to support local providers.

***Patrick Flynn:*** Did not respond.

***Sean Kerwin:*** If there are elements of the zoning code preventing food manufacturing in the city I would be willing to review why they are disallowed and, if appropriate, support amending those restrictions. Beyond that, I think the most important commitment of a city councilor is to be actively engaged with this community and willing to hear and respond to their concerns.

***Brandon Mazer:*** As Shipyard Brewing Company's general counsel, I know the challenges that food manufacturers in Portland face. The Council needs to work with the business community to bring food manufacturing jobs back to Portland. We need to promote small food manufacturing businesses - from fisheries to farms to processing plants - and incentivize them to hire Portland residents.

***Belinda Ray:*** East Bayside is rapidly becoming a hub in Portland's food economy, as evidenced by the beautiful brochure created by the Greater Portland Council of Governments for the Phoenix Fare last month.

Part of the reason East Bayside has been able to grow in this way is that the light industrial zoning that encompasses much of the neighborhood allows for uses such as food manufacturing. So, one thing the City Council can do to help boost food manufacturing jobs in Portland is to make sure that spaces like this area in East Bayside remain open to such uses and that the zoning isn't compromised.

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### **District 2**

***Robert B. Korobkin:*** Economic development in a community occurs across a spectrum of economic activities and organizational models, and a comprehensive approach to facilitating growth in Portland's food economy needs to make sense and be helpful across the spectrum.

On the level of entrepreneurs and independent businesses, our City needs to do more to support local people in starting and sustaining local food manufacturing operations. We need more shared makerspaces, like the Open Bench Project, to offer folks a place to get started. As they grow, the City should help local businesses move into the many vacant commercial spaces in our city, streamlining

the permitting process, helping to secure financing and offering more services to support their development.

At the other end of the spectrum, we need to work harder to attract corporations who want to do large-scale projects in our area. We're probably not about to get textile manufacturing back, but food manufacturing seems promising, especially in light of our city's renaissance in breweries.

However, I disagree vehemently with Gov. LePage's beliefs that we should try to woo big businesses to our community with heavy tax breaks and the "freedom" to pay workers poverty-level wages. As I see it, Greater Portland is attractive because we have a solid community of intelligent, self-directed workers who like to cooperate and are used to coming together to solve problems efficiently and creatively. If we want to attract big food manufactures, we need to sustain a community with high quality public education, healthcare and transportation infrastructure, and we need to make sure that there's decent, affordable workforce housing within walking distance of any proposed jobs.

**Wellington M. Lyons:** I'd like to see us increase the supply of locally produced food by helping entrepreneurs and small manufacturers obtaining financing for scaling up, and I'd like to increase demand for their products by promoting Greater Portland as a global food destination, not just a place for dining out, but a place to come to find some of the best heritage crops and finest meats and cheeses around. Somehow Vermont seems to have given us a run for our money as a local food producers destination, and I'd like to shift that perception.

**Spencer R. Thibodeau:** Council can create a friendly environment to businesses in the food manufacturing industry. It is important to note that the last decade also included one of the worst recessions since the great depression. As Portland expands its "foodie city" reputation, the Council should work to keep Portland in the farm to table chain.

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### At-Large

**Matthew W. Coffey:** Did not respond.

**David S. Foster:** I don't have an answer. I need more information. What particular food industry has downscaled the most? What is the source of the decline? Is it because more food is coming from elsewhere, and is it a similar or different type of food? If this is a question about jobs in Portland, are these people now unemployed or have they found employment in another field or within the same field outside of the city? Also, is food manufacturing something we should be focusing on, or is food production? I am very ignorant on this question, but could the fall in food manufacturing jobs over the last decade have something to do with the organic movement? Is this a natural change in the local food system? I need much more information before I can answer this, please contact me on twitter @DaveFosterPCC

**Nicholas M. Mavodones:** Did not respond.

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**Q6: How can the City Council support a Portland Food Policy Council? (A Food Policy Council brings together City government, the public, and the private farm, fish, and food sector to forward a robust food economy in Portland and to address policy affecting Portland's food system.)**

**District 1**

**Paula M. Guillemette Agopian:** Initiate and participate in dialogue with Dept of Agriculture, representatives from local communities and growers, fishermen, dairymen and the poultry and cattle industries. To talk about the issues i.e. production, marketing and distribution. That is just a start!

**Patrick Flynn:** Did not respond.

**Sean Kerwin:** By officially recognizing it and participating in it; actions I am willing to support.

**Brandon Mazer:** In order to develop a comprehensive food policy that supports farmers, fishermen, consumers, manufacturers and the food insecure, it is critical that we have an open and honest dialogue about the the food issues that matter most to everyone in our community. A Food Policy Council can help to foster this crucial conversation and bring together Portlanders from every part of the food supply chain to create meaningful change. As District 1's Councilor, I will work to make a Food Policy Council an important part of that dialogue.

**Belinda Ray:** I do believe Portland needs a Food Policy Council, and in the early stages, the best way for the City Council to support such a group is to keep the lines of communication open to ensure a free exchange of ideas as we begin to understand the practices and policies that will work best for the city.

There is a great deal of passion around the issue of food policy in Portland, and I have no doubt that the group of people who have already come together around this issue can make great strides in terms of growing Portland's food economy and increasing food security provided the issue is given adequate attention and the Food Policy Council is given a sufficient voice at the table.

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**District 2**

**Robert B. Korobkin:** How exciting! This is totally something I'd like to work on! I can think of a few things that we can do to support an initiative like this:

Leverage municipal technology and media resources to sustain a vibrant online presence through both social media, a highly interactive website and a dynamic mobile app that stakeholders can use to follow conversations and projects.

Establish a consistent, recognizable brand identity that conveys the mission of the council in a way that is instantly recognizable, and include this in City materials and media.

Sponsor events on City property using City resources that bring people together from throughout the local food economy to discuss these issues and collaborate in working together toward building sustainable solutions.

Pay for Food Policy Council staff with tax dollars.

**Wellington M. Lyons:** By replicating the relevant components of a National Food Policy council, as recommended by leading food policy scholars, and providing the funding to make sure it operates as intended.

**Spencer R. Thibodeau:** The Council can support a Portland Food Policy Council, which I support the creation of, by ensuring that there are one or two City Council representatives on the Policy Council who are dedicated and genuinely attentive to the concerns and ideas of the group. The City Council can also leverage the City's communications resources to educate more members of the public about the work of the Policy Council.

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**At-Large**

**Matthew W. Coffey:** Did not respond.

**David S. Foster:** There should be regular communication between everyone involved in Portland's food system. Portland's government website should have public forums built into them where people can post their concerns and suggestions, and get answers and insights from industry professionals and government officials. Schedules are hard to work around, but a public internet forum would be accessible 24/7 and would help to keep everyone on the same page.

**Nicholas M. Mavodones:** Did not respond.

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## **Q7: As City Councilor, what would you like to know about food system issues in Portland?**

### **District 1**

***Paula M. Guillemette Agopian:*** What has the City Council done thus?

***Patrick Flynn:*** Did not respond.

***Sean Kerwin:*** Food is our most basic need, Maine has no shortage of farms and fisheries, and Portland is a well established restaurant destination. It is unconscionable that any of us are food insecure. Portland's restaurant economy is tied to our local farms and fisheries and the efficient distribution of their product. I do not claim to be an expert in this field, but I do recognize its importance and would be very receptive to hearing and acting on the concerns of those engaged in the food system in our area, including through the format of a Food Policy Council.

***Brandon Mazer:*** What does the City Council need to be doing to protect farmers, consumers, producers and the food insecure in Portland?

***Belinda Ray:*** So. Much. More. I look forward to continuing to discuss this issue, learning more, and helping to move Portland forward in this realm.

A couple of specific issues I'd like to know more about now include:

- > the viability of locating and developing an urban farm within Portland's city limits.
- > where we are in terms of researching ordinances to allow beekeeping and small livestock in the city.
- > how we're doing at including diverse populations in these discussions.

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### **District 2**

***Robert B. Korobkin:*** Everything. If elected, one of my first orders of business will be scheduling meetings with as many local experts and community leaders as possible, so that I can learn as much as I can about the challenges facing our community and the different ways that people are organizing to address them.

***Wellington M. Lyons:*** What needs to be done to better promote our local food production and the amazing quality it represents? Maine is known for our lobster, but we should be just as known for our maple syrup, our cheeses, our lamb and beef, our mussels, our oysters, our apples and kale. How do we better brand our products to strengthen our food economy in a way that is consistent with our values?

***Spencer R. Thibodeau:*** I would like to continue to work with local businesses to come up with creative ways to get more fresh and local foods in our City's schools.

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**At-Large**

***Matthew W. Coffey:*** Did not respond.

***David S. Foster:*** Much Much More.

***Nicholas M. Mavodones:*** Did not respond.

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