

HARTFORD FOOD SYSTEM

BUILDING EVALUATION CAPACITY

Evaluation Report 2014-2015

Submitted To:
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the oldest food policy councils in the United States, the Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy was created in 1991 to implement recommendations from the Mayor’s Task Force on Hunger. The purpose of the Commission is to coordinate the efforts of Hartford City agencies to improve access to affordable, safe, and nutritious food for Hartford residents. The mission of the Commission, established in the 1991 City ordinance that established the Commission, is to:

- promote actions that eliminate hunger as an obstacle to a happy, healthy and productive life in Hartford;
- ensure that a wide variety of safe and nutritious food is available for all city residents;
- ensure that access to food is not limited by economic status, location or other factors beyond a resident’s control; and
- ensure that the price of food in the city remains at a level approximating the level for the state.

Despite its long history, the work of the Commission has never been evaluated. This is not unusual among food policy councils in general. Although many cities, communities and even states have formed food policy councils, no standardized process for evaluating their efficacy exists. Conducted between January 2014 and June 2015, this evaluation was conducted by Hartford Food System staff to assess the effectiveness of the Commission, and to establish an evaluative process that may be replicated by other food policy councils nationwide.

Two evaluation questions were identified to guide the evaluation. The first asked to what extent the Commission’s model/approach is effective. The second evaluation question asked to what extent the Commission’s work has led to desirable outcomes for Hartford residents, other City agencies and nonprofit organizations, and city food policies and ordinances. To answer these questions, the following six data collection tools were utilized: Commissioner interviews, meeting observations, a record review, a Hartford resident survey, a City official survey, and a nonprofit organizational survey.

To answer the first evaluation question, several strengths and weaknesses of the Commission’s approach were identified. The following table summarizes the strengths of the Commission identified through this evaluation, as well as the areas for growth.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convening food system stakeholders on a regular basis; • Producing an annual report for City leadership; • Monitoring state and federal nutrition assistance programs; and • Recognizing work being done to improve the food system in Hartford. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited engagement with City leadership; • Insufficient follow-up on recommendations stated in the annual report; and • Lack of a strategic plan for engaging Hartford residents.

To address the second evaluation question—to what extent the Commission’s work has led to positive outcomes for Hartford residents, City officials, and nonprofit organizations— several accomplishments of the Commission since its establishment in 1991 were identified. These outcomes included the following:

- **Hartford Grocery Store Price Survey (1991-2011).** A survey of grocery stores around Hartford was initiated by the Commission in multiple years.

- **Monitoring of the Summer Meals Program (1993-present).** Since 1993, the Commission has been concerned with ensuring that all eligible Hartford children participate in the Summer Meals Program.
- **School Breakfast Campaign and the Golden Muffin Awards (1995-2001).** In 1999, the Commission was involved in the creation of a School Breakfast Committee, comprised of Commissioners, school health teachers, Food Service program directors, and the Superintendent's media director, to devise a campaign to promote school breakfast.
- **Establishment of the Hartford WIC Advisory Committee to improve Hartford's WIC program (2002).** In 2002, the Commission collaborated with the Director of the Hartford Department of Health and Human Services to create the Hartford WIC Advisory Committee due to concerns surrounding staffing vacancies, low enrollment, and poor quality of service provided through the WIC program.
- **Creation of the map of Hartford food resources (2004).** In collaboration with Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), the Commission created a map of Hartford locating local food resources.
- **Approval of the urban agriculture ordinance (2015).** In 2013 and 2014, the Commission recommended the development and implementation of zoning ordinances that support urban agriculture in Hartford. The Commission supported the development of language explaining land use issues relating to urban agriculture, which was reviewed by the City's Planning and Zoning Commission and approved in April 2015.

Based on the strengths and weaknesses identified through the analysis of the data collected, the evaluation team identified the following five recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the Commission:

1. **Develop a process for setting concrete, actionable goals for the Commission.** The Commission should establish a work plan that focuses on setting and achieving concrete goals. This work plan could be developed in conjunction with the annual report and should guide the activities of the Commission throughout the year.
2. **Continue the development of a community engagement strategy.** In the past, the Commission has not had a formal strategy for community engagement. In 2014, the Commission began to develop a long-term community engagement strategy to guide its activities and create systems for the Commission to receive input from community members as well as opportunities to increase community awareness about the Commission's activities and food policy issues in the city. The Commission should continue these efforts and seek to work more closely with Hartford residents on the food policy issues that are important to them.
3. **Develop a strategy for reaching out to key City agencies, commissions, boards, and departments.** To address the disconnect between the Commission and City leadership, the Commission should develop a strategy for engaging with relevant City agencies, commissions, boards, and departments. As a part of this strategy, Commissioners should identify key individuals and groups to work with and determine the most effective strategy for collaborating with them. Increased communication with the City Council and the Office of the Mayor is also recommended, possibly using the presentation of the annual report as a starting place for the conversation about food policy issues in Hartford.
4. **Revisit the City ordinance that established the Commission.** The Commission should review the purpose, goals, powers, and duties established in the 1991 ordinance. By reviewing the ordinance, the Commissioners will gain a better understanding of various logistical issues surrounding the Commission (including the appointment process for Commissioners, the number of Commissioners required for a quorum, etc.), as well as the broader purpose and mission of the Commission. This process should improve the understanding of Commissioners regarding their

role as Commissioners and should allow them to more effectively communicate about the mission and activities of the Commission to City officials, organizations, and Hartford residents.

5. **Share the results of this evaluation with other food policy commissions.** Since there are over 250 food policy councils across North America, according to the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, and since no standardized process for evaluating the effectiveness of food policy councils, the Commission should share the process and results of this report with other food policy councils nationwide.

INTRODUCTION

Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy Overview

The Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy was established by City ordinance in 1991 to implement recommendations from the Mayor's Task Force on Hunger. Continuously operational since then, its purpose is to integrate all agencies in the City in a common effort to improve the availability of safe and nutritious food at reasonable prices for all residents, particularly those in need.

Origins of the Commission

The Commission was formed in response to issues of food insecurity and hunger affecting Hartford residents, which were identified in Hartford through the Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project (CCHIP) conducted by Hispanic Health Council in 1990. The CCHIP showed that the majority of low-income Hartford families with children under 12 years old experienced hunger or were at risk of hunger. In response to these findings, then-mayor Carrie Saxon-Perry convened a Task Force on Hunger, which recommended the creation of a food policy council in Hartford.¹ On October 15, 1991, the Hartford City Council passed a City Ordinance Number 54-91 to establish the Advisory Commission on Food Policy.

Before the Commission was formed, there was a two-tiered approach to food needs in Hartford, with government agencies delivering food assistance in the form of benefits (e.g. SNAP or WIC benefits) or meals (e.g. school breakfast and lunch) and with private organizations providing other services ranging from free food to community garden plots.² Since its formation, the Commission has sought to bridge the gap between those working on food system issues in government and the nonprofit sector in Hartford. In order to do this, the Commission addresses a variety of topics, which are highlighted in the 1991 City ordinance that created the Commission, including transportation, land use, advocacy to local, state and federal government, education, business development, health, monitoring, emergency food supplies, and the role of the private sector.³

Goals of the Commission

The goals of the Commission are to promote actions that eliminate hunger as an obstacle to a happy, healthy and productive life in Hartford; ensure that a wide variety of safe and nutritious food is available for all city residents; ensure that access to food is not limited by economic status, location or other factors beyond a resident's control; and ensure that the price of food in the city remains at a level approximating the level for the state.

Commission Membership

The Commission is composed of fifteen volunteer members, who serve three-year terms with the approval of the City Council. The 1991 City ordinance established that of the fifteen members, one should be the city manager or his/her designee, nine should be representatives of organizations working on food system issues in Hartford, and five should be Hartford residents. The mayor, director of social services and the director of health, or their designees, are also considered ex officio members of the commission.

¹ Dawn Biehler and Melissa Sepos, "The Hartford Food System Guide to Developing Community Food Programs," March 1999, 31.

² City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy, "1998 Annual Report," January 1999, 1.

³ Hartford City Ordinance No. 54-91.

2015 Food Policy Commissioners	
Valerie Bryan	Hartford Resident
Mary Cockram	Hartford Resident
Angela Colantonio	Urban Alliance
Dawn Crayco	End Hunger CT!
Valentine Doyle	Hartford Resident
Tevonne Ellis	REACH Coalition, YMCA
Brunella Iborrola	Hartford Public Schools Food & Child Nutrition Services
Richard Lotstein	HPC Foodservice
Katie S. Martin	University of St. Joseph
Andrew May	Hartford Resident
Martha Page	Hartford Food System
Ron Pitz	Knox, Inc.
Sara Santora	Foodshare
Sofia Segura-Perez	Hispanic Health Council
Danielle Smiley	WIC
Cary Wheaton	Billings Forge Community Works

Activities of the Commission

The primary function of the Commission is to advise the Mayor, City Council, and City Departments on food system issues affecting Hartford residents. Through the submission of an annual report to city leadership, the Commission provides recommendations for city government actions and may advocate for issues in local and state government; however, the Commission does not have the statutory authority to direct city action, nor is its approval required for city resolutions affecting food system issues in Hartford.⁴ As indicated in the 1991 City ordinance, the Commission may collect and monitor data relating to food system conditions in the city, seek and obtain community input on food system issues, and make recommendations to city leadership regarding food policy issues. The specific activities pursued by the Commission are determined by its members, who convene on a monthly basis.

Hartford Food System’s Role

Hartford Food System’s involvement with the Commission began at the Commission’s inception. HFS founding executive director, Mark Winne, participated in the Mayor’s Task Force on Hunger, which recommended the creation of the Commission, and he served a term as Commission chair. Periodically over the Commission’s history, HFS has also hired and supervised Commission interns and staff. Subsequent HFS executive directors also served as Commissioners, including current executive director, Martha Page, who serves as Commission chair. Since 2012, HFS has employed a policy analyst who serves as the part-time staff person for the Commission.



Figure 1 The Hartford Food Policy Commission holds public meetings the second Wednesday of every month at the Hartford Public Library.

⁴ Biehler & Sepos, 32.

About this Report

Despite its long history, the work of the Commission has never been evaluated. This is not unusual among food policy councils in general. Although many cities, communities and even states have formed food policy councils, no standardized process for evaluating their efficacy exists. Conducted between January 2014 and June 2015, this evaluation was conducted by Hartford Food System staff to assess the effectiveness of the Commission, and to establish an evaluative process that may be replicated by other food policy councils nationwide.

METHODS

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation of the Commission was designed to address the following two evaluation questions:

Evaluation Question #1

To what extent is the Commission's model/approach effective?

Evaluation Question #2

To what extent has the Commission's work led to desirable outcomes for Hartford residents, other City agencies and nonprofit organizations, and city food policies and ordinances?

Data Collection

In order to answer these questions, six data collection tools were designed and implemented by HFS staff. The data collection tool protocols may be found in the appendix of this report.

Commissioner interviews. To better understand the perspective of participants in the Commission, several interviews were conducted with past and present Commissioners. Thirty-six Commissioners were contacted to be interviewed, with eleven Commissioners ultimately being interviewed. Each Commissioner was asked eight questions to determine their impressions regarding: a) the clarity of purpose as a Commissioner; b) the accomplishments of the Commission; c) the barriers to success of the Commission; d) strategies for making the Commission more effective; and e) strategies for the Commission to engage a broader audience.

Meeting observations. Several volunteers completed observations of five of the monthly Commission meetings— in July, September, October, November, and December 2014. The meeting observations aimed to capture the attendance of the Commissioners; the number of members of the public, guest speakers, or City representatives who attended the meetings; and the norms and dynamics of the Commission meetings.

Record review. A record review was conducted to summarize and compare key information from Commission records over time. Records that were included in the review include meeting minutes, agendas, work plans, and annual reports. Commissioner names, Commissioner roles, meeting guests, number of community members present, annual report recommendations, projects, decisions, events, issues, outreach, and resolutions were recorded, with specific investigation of the correlation between Commission activities and policy change. A purposeful sample of records was reviewed from seven years—2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012.

Hartford resident survey. The survey for Hartford residents sought to gauge the level of awareness about the Commission among Hartford residents and to determine which food policy issues were of most importance to Hartford residents. The survey was administered at eight different locations throughout Hartford: the North End Farmers Market, the West End Farmers Market, the Old State House Farmers Market, the Burgdorf Health Center, the Hartford Community Kitchen, the Harvest Market, Bushnell Park, the Hartford Public Library, and a graduate class in the University of Connecticut School of Social Work. A total of 108 surveys were collected.

City official survey. The survey for Hartford City officials sought to assess the level of awareness about the Commission among City employees. The survey was sent to 77 individuals in 12 different City departments, agencies, boards, and commissions. City officials included members from the Hartford City Council, the Department of Development Services; the Families, Children, Youth, and Recreation Department; the Department of Health and Human Services; the Livable and Sustainable Neighborhood Initiative; the Department of Procurement; Hartford’s Board of Education; the Hartford Public Schools; and the Mayor’s Office. Twenty-one surveys were completed and submitted via Survey Monkey with a response rate of about 27%.

Organizational survey. The survey for representatives of nonprofit organizations sought to assess the level of awareness about the Commission among nonprofit organizations. The organizational survey was sent to 130 individuals at 49 organizations. The organizations included in the survey focused on nutrition, hunger, agriculture, and the provision of social services. Forty surveys were submitted via Survey Monkey with a response rate of about 30%.

KEY FINDINGS

Data collection for the evaluation of the Commission was completed in early 2015. This section outlines the key findings from each evaluative tool.

Commissioner interviews

To better understand the perspective of participants on the Commission, several interviews were conducted with past and present Commissioners. Thirty-six Commissioners were contacted to be interviewed, and the following eleven Commissioners were interviewed.

Commissioner	Years served on Commission	Organizational affiliation
Lisa Candels	2002-2010	Hartford Life Education, Education Connection
Dawn Crayco	2010-present	End Hunger CT!
Lola Elliot-Hugh	2001-2010	Universal Healthcare Foundation
Jack Hale	1993-2010	Knox Parks, Leadership Greater Hartford
Sally Mancini	2004-2010	Public Peak Affairs
Katie Martin	2011-present	University of St. Joseph
Andrew May	2004-present	Info Line, Wheeler Clinic
Ron Pitz	2011-present	Knox Parks
Sofia Segura-Perez	2005-present	Hispanic Health Council
Cary Wheaton	2011-present	Billings Forge Community Works
Mark Winne	1993-2003	Hartford Food System

Each Commissioner was asked eight questions to determine their impressions regarding: a) the clarity of purpose as a Commissioner; b) the accomplishments of the Commission; c) the barriers to success

of the Commission; d) strategies for making the Commission more effective; and e) strategies for the Commission to engage a broader audience.

Table 2: Understanding of the Commission by Commissioners and City Leadership	
	Yes
During your Commission service, would you judge that the purpose and activity of the Commission was clearly understood by the Commissioners?	73%
During your Commission service, would you judge that the purpose and activity of the Commission was clearly understood and supported by City leadership?	36%

The Commissioners who participated in the interviews indicated that for the most part, the Commissioners did understand the mission of the Commission. The majority of the Commissioners expressed that they believed that the Commission’s mission was to improve the availability and access to healthy food for Hartford residents; however, none of the Commissioners referenced the four-pronged mission of the Commission outlined in the 1991 City ordinance that established the Commission: to eliminate hunger as an obstacle to a happy, healthy and productive life in the city; to ensure that a wide variety of safe and nutritious food is available for city residents; to ensure that access to food is not limited by economic status, location or other factors beyond a resident's control; and to ensure that the price of food in the city remains at a level comparable to the level for the state.

In reflecting on the process for how they learned about the mission and work of the Commission, **some Commissioners expressed that they experienced some level of confusion during the start of their service as a Commissioner due to the fact that they received little to no orientation.** Without any training or orientation for new Commissioners, several Commissioners indicated that they had felt that there was some level of confusion surrounding the mission, especially during the beginning of a new Commissioner’s term. While most Commissioners interviewed agreed that the Commissioners they worked with understood the mission of the Commission, **some commented that there was less clarity around the strategy of the Commission.**

When asked about the level of understanding and support on the part of City leadership, **less than half of the Commissioners interviewed indicated that they felt that the Commission was adequately understood and supported by City leadership.** Several Commissioners remarked that they were pleased that representatives from the WIC program and from the Hartford Public Schools Nutrition Services were involved with the Commission on a regular basis, but that representatives from the Mayor’s Office or the City Council were not consistently engaged. During some periods, a staff person from the City would attend the Commission’s monthly meetings, which was seen as a positive sign of engagement. One Commissioner commented that the City leadership “supports the Commission in theory, but that in terms of paying attention to policy recommendations and facilitating change, it is not a high priority for the City.”

Table 3: Top 5 Accomplishments Identified by Commissioners
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Food Security Awards, which raise awareness about food system work being done in Hartford (6) 2) Increasing community awareness about food system issues through the Annual Report (5) 3) Creation of the L-Tower Avenue bus route to Copaco Plaza in Bloomfield to increase access of Hartford residents to a grocery store (5) 4) Work with Capitol Region Council of Governments to create a map of Hartford food resources (3) 5) Food price survey and working with mid-sized grocery stores in Hartford to promote healthy food items

Note: The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of interview subjects who made similar statements.

The Commissioners interviewed were asked to list three things that stood out to them as important accomplishments of the Commission during the time of their service. (See box above.) A few activities were brought up by multiple Commissioners, especially the semi-annual Food Security Awards, the Annual Report, the creation of a map of Hartford food resources, and the creation of the L Tower bus route to Copaco Plaza in Bloomfield. Other accomplishments included: collaboration with the WIC program to increase participation and advocate for the opening of a new WIC clinic, the price surveys conducted in local grocery stores, the promotion of the Summer Meals Program, the ban on trans fats in the City, the promotion of urban agriculture and community gardens, and the increase in the participation of schools in the School Breakfast Program. Three Commissioners indicated that the convening of different stakeholders in the Commission was an accomplishment in itself.



Figure 2 The Food Security Awards are held by the Commission to raise awareness about food insecurity in Hartford.

Table 4: Top 5 Barriers Identified by Commissioners

- 1) Lack of connection with City leadership (6)
- 2) Limited ability to follow up and act on policy recommendations (6)
- 3) Some elements of the structure and some norms of the Commission impede its effectiveness (e.g. poor communications, lack of group cohesion, spotty meeting attendance, etc.) (6)
- 4) Limited funding (5)
- 5) Lack of community engagement in Commission activities (4)

Note: The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of interview subjects who made similar statements.

The Commissioners were also asked to identify three barriers that impeded the effectiveness of the Commission. (See box above.) Six Commissioners indicated that the **lack of connection with City leadership** represented a challenge for the Commission. They took into account both a lack of support on the part of City leadership and also a need for increased effort on the part of the Commission to connect more with other City departments, boards, and commissions. One Commissioner suggested that the Commission needs to find a champion in the City leadership, and another commented that the general lack of understanding among City leadership regarding food policy and the role of the Commission should be addressed.

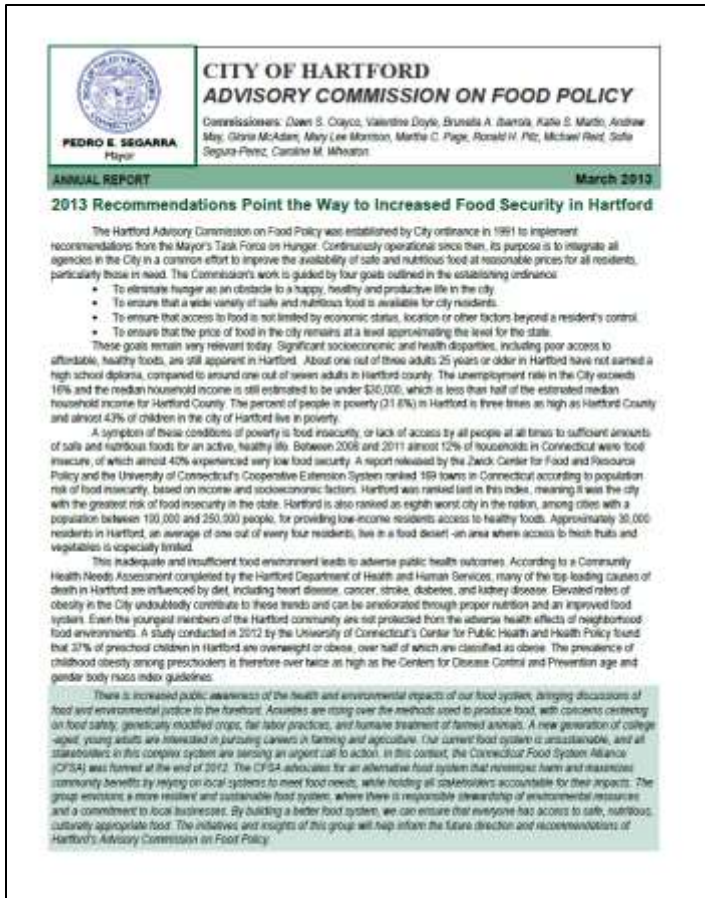


Figure 3 The Commission is responsible for submitting an annual report with policy recommendations to City leadership.

Six of the Commissioners interviewed also indicated that the Commission’s **limited ability to follow up and act on policy recommendations** is a significant barrier to its effectiveness. Two Commissioners commented that the focus of the Commission tends to be broad and overarching, which makes it difficult to develop a more focused action plan. With its broad focus, the Commission can become a space for information sharing and support, rather than a space to work towards action and policy change. One Commissioner commented that the annual report is viewed as “an assignment rather than a launching pad for action.”

Various **barriers relating to the structure and norms of the Commission** were also discussed, including the lack of diversity among the Commissioners, poor communications and group cohesion between the Commissioners, a lack of clarity surrounding the roles of the Commissioners, and inconsistent meeting attendance. Some of these barriers were attributed to the limited resources of the Commission, which is composed of volunteer Commissioners, who work on hunger and food system issues in Hartford, but who are already overtaxed and therefore have limited time to dedicate to their work on the Commission.

The question of **limited resources and funding** was discussed by five Commissioners, who identified budgetary limitations as a top barrier to the effectiveness of the Commission. The periods of the Commission’s history when there was no staff member were discussed as being less effective due to the lack of funding to hire a staff person.

The **lack of effective communication with community members** was also seen as a barrier to the Commission’s success. Four Commissioners indicated that the Commission has difficulty communicating about food system issues to the general public and that it has no system in place to receive input and share information with community members.

During the interviews, the Commissioners were also asked how the Commission could most effectively respond to food system and hunger issues in Hartford and whether there were structural, process, or policy changes that they would suggest for the Commission. Many of these suggestions responded to the barriers identified below.

Table 5: Strategies to improve the effectiveness of the Commission Identified by Commissioners

- 1) **Increase communications with City leadership.** Several strategies for improving communications with City leadership were identified. The Commissioners interviewed suggested that the Commission increase its communications with the Mayor's Office and other City agencies, especially the Hartford Public Schools and the Food and Child Nutrition Services. This increased communication could take the form of an invitation to a representative from the Mayor and City Council to attend the Commission meetings on a regular basis to keep City leadership informed of the Commission's activities. It was also suggested that the Commission begin to view its annual report as an action plan and present it to the City leadership rather than submitting it via email or a hard copy.
- 2) **Create more opportunities to engage community members.** To increase the level of community engagement, the Commissioners interviewed called for the Commission to host more events involving community members. They also suggested creating more mechanisms for community members to get involved in the Commission and for the Commission to receive community input. For instance, the Commission could create sub-committees on various issues and invite community members to become involved.
- 3) **Narrow the focus of the Commission to increase impact.** Due to the complex and multifaceted nature of food system issues, the Commission has a wide variety of issues that it can choose to work on. Several Commissioners suggested that the Commission should create a strategic plan that focuses on one or two issues in depth, rather than focusing on several issues more superficially.
- 4) **Improve communications and group cohesion within the Commission.** To create a more effective Commission, a few Commissioners recommended exploring strategies to improve communications and group cohesion. These could include guidelines to follow up on items from Commission meetings or more opportunities for training for Commissioners, which would enable a greater understanding of the duties of each Commissioner. The creation of an orientation packet for new Commissioners was suggested to assist the integration of new members into the Commission.
- 5) **Recruit Commissioners who can take action on priority recommendations.** Regarding the Commissioner recruitment process, a few Commissioners suggested targeting individuals who could take action on priority recommendations identified by the Commission. By placing an emphasis on the ability to act on target issues, the Commission can ensure that it acts as a team of active food system stakeholders, rather than a group of concerned citizens.
- 6) **Reconsider the purpose of the Commission by creating a strong vision that includes a variety of different stakeholders.** In order to ensure that Commissioners understand and feel strongly about the work of the Commission and to create opportunities for the participation of other community members in the Commission, the Commissioners should reevaluate the mission and vision of the Commission and ensure that it encourages the participation of a wide variety of stakeholders.
- 7) **Improve the web presence of the Commission.** As the Commission currently has no updated page on the City of Hartford website, nor a website of its own or a social media presence, the Commission should develop a strategy regarding its web presence, at least ensuring that its page on the City website is updated.

Meeting observations

One of the main activities of the Commission is convening for meetings on a monthly basis. To better understand the dynamics of the Commission, five meeting observations were conducted in 2014. Meeting observations were conducted by volunteers at the July, September, October, November, and December meetings of the Commission to capture the attendance of the Commissioners; the number of members of the public, guest speakers, or City representatives who attended the meetings; and the norms and dynamics of the Commission meetings.

The observations captured information about the structure of the Commission meetings, which take place the second Wednesday of every month from 3:30-5pm at the Hartford Public Library. The meetings are held in the library’s Ground Floor Classroom and are open to the public. In these meetings, about 25 chairs are set up around several tables situated in a U-shape with Commissioners and guests seated around the tables.

Table 6: Commissioner Attendance at Select Meetings in 2014

	July	September	October	November	December
Attendance	57%	71%	64%	71%	53%

The majority of the attendees represented at these meetings are Commissioners, with a handful of guests attending each of the meetings observed. In July, September, and October there was one vacancy on the fifteen seat Commission (e.g. there were 14 out of a possible 15 members). In November, three new Commissioners joined the group, bringing the total to seventeen—two more than the number of Commissioners allowed by the City ordinance that determined the rules of Commission membership. The confusion surrounding the number of Commissioners and the appointment and reappointment process reflect a need for the Commissioners and Commission/City staff to become more familiar with the rules of the Commission. For the five meetings observed, the average attendance for Commissioners (as indicated in Table 2 above) was 63%, with a high of 71% and a low of 53%.

More than twenty individual guests attended Commission meetings in the five meetings observed, with an average of seven guests at each meeting. A few guests regularly attended the observed Commission meetings, including a community network builder from Foodshare, a representative from the Connecticut Food Policy Council, and the Commission staff person and intern from Hartford Food System. Other meeting guests included representatives from other Hartford organizations and a few interested Hartford residents. **Overall, very few members of the community attended the observed Commission meetings.**

The structure and dynamics of the Commission meetings may influence the Commission’s effectiveness in a number of ways. For instance, the Commission meetings are open to the public; however, the timing of the meeting from 3:30-5pm may make the meeting difficult to attend for those who cannot attend as part of their work. The meeting structure is welcoming to guests, as all attendees are given the opportunity to speak, although a few observations mentioned that the meetings lack a structure to encourage everybody to participate.

The meetings observed typically followed an agenda sent out prior to the meeting date, with the Commission chair leading the group discussion. The topics for discussion are determined in the agenda-setting process, where a draft agenda is sent to Commissioners by the Commission staff person asking for changes or additions to the agenda; sometimes Commissioners offer new items or changes to the agenda, but usually the topics of the draft agenda are discussed in the meetings. **Greater participation in the agenda-setting process on the part of other Commissioners could increase the level of overall participation of group members in the Commission.**

The topics discussed in the observed meetings varied each month, with a few ongoing projects being discussed in multiple meetings. **The range of issues discussed in the meetings reflect the many projects that Commissioners are involved with; however, it may also suggest a need for greater focus in the Commission’s approach.** The decision making process observed in these meetings usually involved a discussion of the issue at hand, with all Commissioners making the decision as a group. Some of the decisions discussed in the observed meetings included the creation of a work plan to guide the development of a new community engagement strategy, the determination

of the logistics of the Food Security Awards event, and the process for drafting recommendations for the Commission’s annual report.

Record review

To assess the activities of the Commission over time, a review of records from the Commission was conducted. The record review sought to compare key information from Commission records over time in order to gather information regarding: Commissioner roles, meeting guests, number of community members present, annual report recommendations, projects, decisions, events, issues, outreach, and resolutions. Records from 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012 were evaluated. The records reviewed included annual reports, work plans, meeting minutes, and agendas. While not all years reviewed included an annual report or work plan, the goals and activities of the Commission during these years were determined through meeting minutes and agendas.

Year	# goals set	# goals completed	Records available
2000	22	13	Annual Report, Work Plan, Summary of Goals and Accomplishments, meeting minutes
2002	13	11	Work Plan for 2002, Mayor’s Update 2002, Annual Report 2002, meeting minutes
2004	16	8	Work Plan for 2004, Summary Food Policy Commission Work & Activities 2004-2005, meeting minutes
2006	17	5	HFPC Draft Work Plan 2006, meeting minutes
2008	5	4	Meeting minutes
2010	13	9	Annual Report, meeting minutes
2012	11	8	Annual Report, meeting minutes

A major goal of the record review was to identify the goals set by the Commission in each year studied and to evaluate its effectiveness in achieving its stated goals. However, assessing the goals set and achieved by the Commission in a given year was made difficult by the lack of available records during some years, reflecting inconsistent record keeping by the Commission over time. For instance, in 2000, the records available included a 22-page annual report, a summary of goals and accomplishments, and meeting minutes; while in 2008, only five months of meeting minutes were available. According to the records available, the number of goals set in the years studied, varied significantly. In 2000, 22 goals were set, including concrete goals such as “transmit six letters on the Commission’s positions;” “cosponsor a city conference on health and nutrition;” and “invite four City officials or department heads to Commission meetings.” Goals identified in later years reflected generally fewer goals set, which also tended to be broader. For instance, in 2012, some of the eleven goals set included SNAP and WIC enrollment” and “support the Summer Food Program.”

Activity	Description	Years conducted
Community Food Security Awards	A public event held to raise awareness around food security issues in Hartford and to recognize individuals, businesses, and organizations working to improve the food system in Hartford	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010
Grocery Store Price Surveys	A survey of grocery stores in Hartford and the surrounding area to compare the price of products across stores in different areas	2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2012
Summer Meals Monitoring	Various activities, including surveys and site visits, to evaluate the food offered in the Summer Meals Program	2000, 2002, 2004, 2008, 2010
Annual Report	A report to the Mayor and City Council with policy recommendations on food system issues in Hartford	2000, 2002, 2010, 2012

In the years examined in the record review, several activities stood out as recurring projects of the Commission, including hosting the Community Food Security Awards, conducting grocery store price surveys, monitoring of the Summer Meals Program, and creating an annual report.

These activities reflect the purpose and duties of the Commission outlined in the City ordinance that established the Commission. The ordinance states that one of the goals of the Commission is to “ensure that the price of food in the city remains at a level approximating the level for the state,” which reflects the importance of the grocery store price surveys, conducted in six of the seven years studied. The ordinance also lists as one of the duties of the Commission the submission of an annual report to the City Council, Mayor, and City Manager summarizing the progress made in achieving the Commission’s goals. For three of the years evaluated, an annual report could not be located, and in one year (2008) neither a work plan nor an annual report could be identified. **The variation in the records available reflects the lack of a consistent goal setting process in the Commission over the years.**

Residential survey

To assess the Commission’s effectiveness and to better understand the extent to which its work has led to desirable outcomes for Hartford residents, a survey of Hartford residents was conducted in eight different locations throughout Hartford. A total of 108 surveys were collected, 61% of which were completed by Hartford residents, and 39% of which were completed by non-Hartford residents present at the survey locations.

The residential survey was designed to gauge the familiarity of Hartford residents with the Commission, as well as the food policy issues that were most important to Hartford residents. Survey participants were asked to rank the importance of food policy issues to themselves and their families on a scale of *not at all important, somewhat important, important, and very important*. The top issue identified by the survey respondents was the availability and affordability of fruits, vegetables, and other healthy items, with 83% of survey participants identifying this issue as *very important*.

Table 9: Food Policy Issues Ranked by Hartford Residents

Food Policy Issue	Very Important
1) Making fruit and vegetables, and healthy items less expensive and more available	83%
2) Having healthy items and fruits and vegetables available at food pantries	75%
3) Serving healthy foods at childcare centers	74%
4) Making sure children eat breakfast in school	73%
5) Helping city food retailers, bodegas and corner stores sell fresh fruits and vegetables and healthier items	65%
6) Having a farmer’s market in my neighborhood	65%
7) Having more places for children to eat for free in the summer	63%
8) Having more restaurants that serve healthy foods in my neighborhood	60%
9) Having a grocery store I can walk to	55%
10) Making it easier to enroll in SNAP or WIC	52%
11) Having a community garden or urban farm in my neighborhood	45%

In addition to ranking the above food policy issues, survey participants were also asked to identify other important food policy issues and to provide suggestions for projects the Commission should undertake. Several of the issues highlighted in the food policy issue ranking were repeated, especially the availability of healthy foods, child nutrition, farmers markets, and designated urban gardening areas for Hartford residents. Another issue that was mentioned by several respondents was the importance of cooking and nutrition education. Many respondents also expressed dissatisfaction with the products of the industrial food system, including the use of GMOs, preservatives, and high fructose corn syrup, and a desire for more high-quality food options.

Table 10: Commission Activities Suggested by Hartford Residents

- 1) **Increase the accessibility of healthy foods for Hartford residents.** Many respondents suggested working with corner stores to help them provide affordable and healthy foods that are located near residential neighborhoods. A few respondents suggested the Commission should work on making fresh produce more affordable, possibly through the extension of incentive programs for SNAP in grocery stores.
- 2) **Let the community know about Commission activities and provide opportunities for community engagement.** Respondents frequently commented that they would like to know more about the Commission's activities, suggesting that the Commission should distribute informational materials through the Hartford Public Library branches and engage more actively in Hartford neighborhoods, possibly through attending Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) or other neighborhood meetings.
- 3) **Advocate for the establishment of new grocery stores in Hartford.** Some respondents indicated that the Commission should work on bringing a new grocery store to the city.
- 4) **Support food pantries.** Several respondents emphasized the importance of food pantries for many Hartford residents in getting sufficient food. Recommendations included the publicizing of food pantry locations and hours and the promotion of more fresh produce at food pantries.

Survey participants were also asked whether they had heard of the Commission, with 24% of participants indicating that they were familiar with the Commission. Fifty percent of respondents expressed an interest in attending a monthly Commission meeting. It should be noted that these statistics may overestimate the percentage of Hartford residents that are aware of the Commission, possibly due to the settings in which the surveys were conducted (e.g. at farmers markets or inside the Burgdorf Center where the City of Hartford Department of Health and Human Services is located, and where individuals interested in food and nutrition issues are more likely to frequent).

City official survey

To evaluate the extent to which the Commission's work has led to desirable outcomes for Hartford City officials and City agencies, a survey was sent out via email to various individuals in different city departments, agencies, boards, and commissions. City officials included members from the Hartford City Council, the Department of Development Services; the Families, Children, Youth, and Recreation Department; the Department of Health and Human Services; the Livable and Sustainable Neighborhood Initiative; the Department of Procurement; Hartford's Board of Education; the Hartford Public Schools; and the Mayor's Office. Seventy-seven surveys were sent out, with 21 surveys completed for a response rate of 27%.

*"I continue to be impressed with the leadership and work of the commission. Members are extremely dedicated to its cause and collaborate efforts to ensure great outcomes."
--Survey respondent*

The survey results indicated that 75% of city official respondents were aware of the Commission. Sixty-six percent of respondents indicated that they had met with a Commissioner in their work, several reporting that they had attended a monthly Commission meeting or two, collaborated with an individual Commissioner, or made a presentation to the Commission. The Commission's annual report was identified as a potential way that City officials had learned about the Commission, with 71% of respondents reporting that they were aware of the annual report and 35% noting that they had referred to the annual report in their work.

Table 11: City Official Familiarity with the Commission

Survey Question	YES
Did you know that Hartford has an Advisory Commission on Food Policy that advises the Mayor, City Council, and other city departments and agencies on matters related to hunger and the food system?	75%
Are you aware that the Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy releases an Annual Report with recommendations to improve food access and security?	71%
Would you be interested in working with a liaison from the Advisory Commission on Food Policy to identify ways to work together?	66%
Would you be interested in attending a Commission meeting, held the second Wednesday of every month at 3:30pm at the Hartford Public Library?	65%
Have you referred to the Annual Report in your work?	35%
Have you met with the Commission or any Commissioners in conducting your work?	33%

Overall, the City official respondents demonstrated a high level of awareness with the Commission, but a lower level of actual interactions with the Commission. The majority of respondents indicated that they would be interested in working with a liaison to identify ways to work with the Commission or in attending a Commission meeting. Survey participants were asked about their preferred method of being informed of Commission activities, with over 70% preferring email newsletters, and 30% preferring social media, written reports, or other methods.

Comments from individuals in the City Council Health and Human Services committee suggested that this group in particular is interested in the work of the Commission:

“Commissions are encouraged to report any new developments and/or accomplishments to the Health and Human Services committee of Hartford City Council. The committee meets the first Monday of every month and can be added to the agenda if notification is given prior to the meeting date.”

“As always, Councilman Deutsch as Chair of the Health and Human Services committee, encourages collaborations of various city entities such as the Commission on Refugees and Immigrant Affairs as well as the Commission on Disability Issues.”

Organizational survey

In addition to the residential and City official surveys, a survey of representatives from nonprofit organizations working on food system issues in Hartford was conducted to determine the extent to which the Commission’s work has led to desirable outcomes for nonprofit organizations in Hartford. The survey was sent to 130 individuals at 49 organizations. A total of 40 surveys were submitted with a response rate of about 30%. The nonprofits included in the survey were selected due to their focus on nutrition, hunger, agriculture, and social service provision for Hartford residents.

Eighty-eight percent of survey respondents indicated that they were aware of the Commission and its role to advise the Mayor, City Council, and other City departments. Thirty-three percent of respondents reported having met with a Commissioner in conducting their work, with some respondents reporting having attended a monthly meeting, collaborating with a Commissioner on specific projects or programming, or working with a Commissioner outside the Commission. Only about a quarter of respondents reported having referred to the Commission’s annual report in their work. The vast majority of respondents (85%) expressed interest in working with a liaison from the Commission to identify ways to work together.

Table 12. Nonprofit Organizational Familiarity with the Commission

Survey Question	YES
Did you know that Hartford has an Advisory Commission on Food Policy that advises the Mayor, City Council, and other city departments and agencies on matters related to hunger and the food system?	88%
Would you be interested in working with a liaison from the Advisory Commission on Food Policy to identify ways to work together?	85%
Would you be interested in attending a Commission meeting, held the second Wednesday of every month at 3:30pm at the Hartford Public Library?	63%
Are you aware that the Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy releases an Annual Report with recommendations to improve food access and security?	48%
Have you met with the Commission or any Commissioners in conducting your work?	33%
Have you referred to the Annual Report in your work?	24%

As was the case in the City official survey, the vast majority of respondents (78%) preferred being kept informed of the Commission’s activities through an email newsletter, versus other methods including social media, website updates, written reports, or press events.

“Be more public and share more information with the neighborhood organizations.”
--Survey respondent

In response to an open-ended request for additional comments, several survey participants indicated their willingness to work with the Commission through collaboration on public events, attendance of Commission meetings, and inviting Commissioners to speak at organizational meetings (NRZ meetings, for instance) in cases where individuals are unable to attend the Commission’s monthly meetings. A recurring theme was that the organizational representatives surveyed were interested in being kept informed of the Commission’s activities and potentially collaborating on projects.

“Perhaps regular correspondences such as quarterly newsletter or updates via Facebook could serve as prompts to remind me (and others) of this important, local resource.”

ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis of Findings

To analyze the effectiveness of the Commission, two evaluation questions were defined at the start of this evaluation: 1) to what extent is the Commission’s model/approach effective? and 2) to what extent has the Commission’s work led to desirable outcomes for Hartford residents, other City agencies and nonprofit organizations, and city food policies and ordinances?

To answer the first question—to what extent the Commission’s approach is effective—findings from each data collection tool were analyzed. According to one City official included in the City official Survey, “The Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy is one of the City’s most active commissions. Their annual report is well-done and their activities are important to Hartford.” Several findings in the table below highlight what the Commission is doing well and where it can improve.

Table 13: Strengths and Weakness of the Commission

Strengths

Convening food system stakeholders on a regular basis. The Commission is currently comprised of 16 members, who represent a variety of organizations and groups involved in the food system in Hartford. This group includes several nonprofit organizations (Hartford Food System, Knox, Foodshare, Billings Forge Community Works, Urban Alliance, REACH Coalition, and End Hunger CT!), a university (St. Joseph’s), a business (HPC Foodservice) and two government programs (WIC and the Hartford Public Schools Food & Child Nutrition Services), as well as several Hartford residents.

Producing an annual report for City leadership. One of the essential duties of the Commission is to provide an annual report with recommendations for City leadership. Since 2010, the Commission has consistently produced an annual report on an annual basis, providing policy recommendations to City leadership on a range of food policy issues. In the City official survey, respondents indicated that the Commission’s annual report is consistently of high quality.

Monitoring state and federal nutrition assistance programs. Several Commissioners work on promoting essential federal nutrition assistance programs, including SNAP, the Summer Meals Program, the School Breakfast Program, and the School Lunch Program, and state programs like WIC. These Commissioners consistently update the Commission as a whole on the status of these programs in Hartford, which influences the policy recommendations made by the Commission in the annual report and sometimes leads to new Commission activities.

Recognizing work being done to improve the food system in Hartford. Through the Golden Muffin Awards, which recognized schools for efforts to improve school breakfast participation rates, and through the Community Food Security Awards, which recognize individuals, organizations, and businesses working on food system issues in Hartford, the Commission has consistently sought to raise awareness about food insecurity in Hartford by recognizing the work being done to improve the food system in the city.


Weaknesses

Engaging with City leadership. A primary reason for the establishment of the Commission in 1991 was to “integrate all agencies of the city in a common effort to improve the availability of safe and nutritious food at reasonable prices for all residents, particularly those in need” (Sec. 2-327). In the Commissioner interviews, the Commissioners identified a lack of connection with City leadership as the top challenge for the Commission. While 75% of respondents in the City official survey indicated that they were aware of the Commission, 66% indicated that they had met with a Commissioner in their work, and just 35% had referred to the annual report in their work. Furthermore, the record review indicates that very few representatives from City leadership have attended Commission meetings in recent years. In previous years, a representative from the Mayor’s office had attended Commission meetings on a regular basis, according to the Commissioner interviews; however, this direct connection with City leadership seems to have weakened in recent years.

Following up on recommendations stated in the annual report. In an interview, one Commissioner commented that the Commissioners treat the annual report as an assignment rather than as an action plan. While the Commission consistently produces an annual report for City leadership, there is no protocol established for following up on each policy recommendation posed in the report. In addition to a lack of support from City leadership, the other top barrier identified through the interviews was the lack of ability to follow up and act on policy recommendations. The relatively low number of representatives from the nonprofit sector and from city leadership that indicated that they have referred to the Commission’s annual report in their work (24% for organizations and 35% for City officials) could reflect a need for greater promotion and follow-up on the recommendations stated in the report.

Engaging with Hartford residents. The Commission currently lacks a strategy for engaging community members in its work. In the resident survey, a recurring suggestion from respondents was that the Commission should be more open and share its activities with community members. While less than a quarter of respondents indicated that they were aware of the Commission, half expressed an interest in attending a monthly Commission meeting. Currently, attending a Commission meeting is the primary way for non-Commissioners, including community members, to get involved with the Commission’s activities; however, the timing of the meeting—3:30-5pm on a weekday—presents a challenge for those who cannot miss work to attend a meeting. Through the Commissioner interviews, several Commissioners indicated that the Commission currently lacks a system to receive input and share information with community members.

The second research question asked to what extent the Commission’s work has led to desirable outcomes for Hartford residents, other City agencies, and nonprofit organizations, and city food policies and ordinances. Since its establishment in 1991, the Commission has worked on many projects that have led to positive outcomes for Hartford residents, City agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

Table 14: Case Study on the Creation of the L-Tower Avenue CTTransit Bus Route	
<p>A major accomplishment of the Commission was the creation of the L-Tower Avenue CTTransit bus route, which linked Hartford residents with Copaco Center in Bloomfield in 2000. This accomplishment was brought up by several Commissioners, many of whom were not members of the Commission at the time of the project. Commissioners identified transportation as a significant barrier to accessing food for many Hartford residents. Having identified the need for increased public transportation to grocery stores, the Commissioners conducted extensive surveys with CTTransit users to understand the ways that Hartford residents utilized CTTransit to access food. The Commission reached out to CTTransit about the importance of transit access for Hartford residents in accessing food and successfully advocated for the use of Jobs Access funds administered by the Capital Region Council of Governments to fund the creation of the new bus line, which linked residents in the North End of Hartford to Bloomfield and Manchester. During the first year of the L-Tower Avenue bus route’s operations, ridership increased over 100% from 4,978 passengers in September 2000 to 10,349 passengers in August 2001.⁵ The Commissioners continued to monitor the L-Tower Avenue route, and in 2001 when the route was cut back to hourly service to stretch out the remaining Jobs Access funds to keep the route in service, the Commission contacted several neighborhood groups and local legislators, in addition to conducting more surveys with CTTransit riders, to alert them to the need for permanent funding for the route.</p> <p>The example of the Commission’s work to advocate for the creation of the L-Tower Avenue bus route and the securing of permanent funding for the route is an example of the Commission at its most effective. The Commissioners identified a need for Hartford residents in accessing food, engaging with residents through surveys and collaboration with community groups and reaching out to legislators and City leadership to help establish and protect a bus route that significantly improved food access for thousands of Hartford residents.</p>	 <p>Figure 4 The establishment of the L-Tower Avenue bus route was a major accomplishment of the Commission and made a significant impact in increasing food security for residents in the North End of Hartford.</p>

Since the Commission’s establishment in 1991, Commission activities have led to several positive outcomes for Hartford residents, City officials, and organizations, including:

- **Hartford Grocery Store Price Survey (1991-2011).** A survey of grocery stores around Hartford was initiated by the Commission in multiple years. The study surveyed the quality, availability, and prices of grocery stores based on store size. These surveys revealed variations between grocery

⁵ L-Tower Avenue Bus Route—serving the towns of Bloomfield, Hartford, Manchester, South Windsor, and Windsor: Saving a Route that WORKS: A Report on Transit and Food Access by the City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy, 2002.

stores of different sizes and between stores in and around Hartford. The results of these surveys gave City officials an opportunity to promote and encourage healthy food businesses.

- **Monitoring of the Summer Meals Program (1993-present).** Since 1993, the Commission has been concerned with ensuring that all eligible Hartford children participate in the Summer Meals Program. In previous years, the Commission has conducted surveys to rate the quality of meals served through the program. The Commission also attempted to recruit a local vendor to service the Summer Meals Program. Recent efforts to promote the Summer Meals Program include the promotion of the program through schools and the CT Summer Meals Location Finder.
- **School Breakfast Campaign and the Golden Muffin Awards (1995-2001).** In 1999, the Commission was involved in the creation of a School Breakfast Committee, comprised of Commissioners, school health teachers, Food Service program directors, and the Superintendent's media director, to devise a campaign to promote school breakfast. This group was involved in promoting the School Breakfast Program through a variety of methods including the Golden Muffin Awards, which were given out to recognize Hartford schools for student participation in the School Breakfast Program.
- **Establishment of the Hartford WIC Advisory Committee to improve Hartford's WIC program (2002).** In 2002, the Commission collaborated with the Director of the Hartford Department of Health and Human Services to create the Hartford WIC Advisory Committee due to concerns surrounding staffing vacancies, low enrollment, and poor quality of service provided through the WIC program. The Committee convened for six months to evaluate the effectiveness of the Hartford WIC program and to provide a report to the City Manager, Mayor, and City Council to include recommendations for program modifications and the need for future input from program participants. The Committee sought the collaboration of a wide variety of stakeholders including, WIC client representatives, WIC staff, WIC vendors, representatives from farmers markets, City Councilors, health professionals, city residents, emergency food assistance program staff, and the Director of the Health Department. The report created by the Committee provided feedback and recommendations for the improvement of the WIC program.
- **Creation of the map of Hartford food resources (2004).** In collaboration with Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), the Commission created a map of Hartford locating local food resources. This map served as a resource to Hartford residents, City officials, and nonprofit organizations to be able to find grocery stores, local urban farms and farmers markets as well as located areas for future developments of grocery stores and community gardens.
- **Approval of the urban agriculture ordinance (2015).** In 2013 and 2014, the Commission recommended the development and implementation of zoning ordinances that support urban agriculture in Hartford. The Commission supported the development of an urban agriculture ordinance, which has been drafted by Hartford Food System, Knox, and the City of Hartford Department of Health and Human Services to clarify the regulations surrounding urban agriculture activities, including the raising, harvesting, processing, marketing, and distribution of locally grown food, as well as related activities such as composting and the keeping of chickens and bees. A large portion of the urban agriculture ordinance, which deals with zoning and land use issues relating to urban agriculture, was reviewed by the City's Planning and Zoning Commission and was approved in April 2015.



Figure 5 The creation of a map of community food resources was intended to be a resource for City officials and organizations.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the data collected, we recommend the following next steps for the Commission:

- **Develop a process for setting concrete, actionable goals for the Commission.** The Commission should establish a work plan that focuses on setting and achieving concrete goals. This work plan could be developed in conjunction with the annual report and should guide the activities of the Commission throughout the year.
- **Continue the development of a community engagement strategy.** In the past, the Commission has not had a formal strategy for community engagement. In 2014, the Commission began to develop a long-term community engagement strategy to guide its activities and create systems for the Commission to receive input from community members as well as opportunities to increase community awareness about the Commission's activities and food policy issues in the city. The Commission should continue these efforts and seek to work more closely with Hartford residents on the food policy issues that are important to them.
- **Develop a strategy for reaching out to key City agencies, commissions, boards, and departments.** To address the disconnect between the Commission and City leadership, the Commission should develop a strategy for engaging with relevant City agencies, commissions, boards, and departments. As a part of this strategy, Commissioners should identify key individuals and groups to work with and determine the most effective strategy for collaborating with them. Increased communication with the City Council and the Office of the Mayor is also recommended, possibly using the presentation of the annual report as a starting place for the conversation about food policy issues in Hartford.
- **Revisit the City ordinance that established the Commission.** The Commission should review the purpose, goals, powers, and duties established in the 1991 ordinance. By reviewing the ordinance, the Commissioners will gain a better understanding of various logistical issues surrounding the Commission (including the appointment process for Commissioners, the number of Commissioners required for a quorum, etc.), as well as the broader purpose and mission of the Commission. This process should improve the understanding of Commissioners regarding their role as Commissioners and should allow them to more effectively communicate about the mission and activities of the Commission to City officials, organizations, and Hartford residents.
- **Share the results of this evaluation with other food policy commissions.** Since there are over 250 food policy councils across North America, according to the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, and since no standardized process for evaluating the effectiveness of food policy councils, the Commission should share the process and results of this report with other food policy councils nationwide.

APPENDIX

The following appendix includes each of the data collection tools used in this evaluation, as well as the Hartford City Ordinance No. 54-91, which established the Commission in 1991.

Data Collection Tools

Each of the following data collection tools was implemented to inform the evaluation of the Commission's effectiveness.

- 1) Commissioner Interviews
- 2) Meeting Observations
- 3) Record Review
- 4) Hartford Resident Survey
- 5) City Official Survey
- 6) Organizational Survey

The details of how each tool was administered may be found in the "Methods" section in the body of this report.

Commissioner interviews

Commissioner Interview Administration and Analysis Plan Protocol

HACFP – CURRENT and FORMER COMMISSIONER INTERVIEW

Respondent Name:

Years Served on Commission:

Current Title:

Current Organization (if applicable):

Hartford Resident ___YES ___ NO

Interviewer:

Today's Date:

1. Prior to your service on the Advisory Commission, had you been part of any other City Commission or served the City of Hartford in any other capacity?

2. During your Commission service, would you judge that the purpose and activity of the Commission was clearly understood by the Commissioners?

3. During your Commission service, would you judge that the purpose and activity of the Commission was understood and supported by City leadership? Explain.

4. From your perspective, are there three things that stand out as important accomplishments of the Commission during your time of service?

5. Again from your perspective, are there three things that stand out as barriers to the effectiveness of the Commission during your time of service?

6. How do you think the Commission could most effectively respond to the food system and hunger issues in Hartford? Are there structural, process, or policy changes to the Commission that you can suggest?

7. Is it important to have a Commission on Food Policy? Why or Why not?

8. If you believe it is important to have a Commission on Food Policy, are there ways that you can suggest that would make the work of the Commission reach a broader audience?

Meeting observations

Meeting Observation Administration and Analysis Plan Protocol

Presiding Body:

Date:

Type of Meeting:

Time Observation Began:

Observer's Name:

Time Ended:

1. Subject of the Observation

2. Who are the participants?

3. How is the room set up? Where do the participants sit? Is there a distinction between the public and members of the presiding body?

4. How does the session begin? Is there an agenda? Do they follow Robert's Rules? Who is leading the meeting?

5. Describe the chronology of events.

6. Describe the interactions that take place.
 - 6a. Who is interacting?

 - 6b. How do they interact? Are there rules that govern the interactions? Can everyone speak?

7. Describe how decisions are made during the meeting.
 - 7a. Who makes decisions?

 - 7b. How are decisions communicated?

 - 7c. Examples of decisions made during the meeting.

8. How does the meeting adjourn?

Record review

Record Review Administration and Analysis Plan Protocol

Current Year in Review:

Documentation setting goals for review year: (i.e. Annual Reports, Work Plans, other):

Total number of meetings held:

Commission Members

Commissioner Name	Commissioner Role /Affiliation (If known)	Number of Meetings Attended

Fill out the following questions below based on information found in supporting documents for year in review:

(Example: if you are reviewing 1999, look at 1998's annual report)

1. What did the commission state or set as goals for the upcoming year?
2. What were the accomplishments of the commission outlined in the annual report?

Looking at the document that was used to set goals for the current year being analyzed, and using minutes, agendas, and additional documents from the current year being analyzed fill out the chart below to compare and contrast between what goals were set, accomplished, in progress, postponed, or not achieved.

Comparison of Goals Set Versus Goals Achieved

Year (xxxx) Goal Set by Commission	Year (xxxx) Goal Completion Status by end of year	Brief Description of Action Items / Timeline	Items resulting in Votes (Y/N) & Description	Legislation/ Policies/ Ordinances involved or changed as result of actions
			(Y/N)	
			(Y/N)	
			(Y/N)	

Synopsis: *(Describe briefly what goals set in the previous year were accomplished during the year being analyzed. Describe any legislation, policy, or ordinances changed that led to major changes. Based on goals set versus goals completed- what is the effectiveness of the commission for the year being analyzed?)*

Hartford resident survey

Hartford Resident Survey Administration and Analysis Plan Protocol



COMMUNITY SURVEY ON FOOD POLICY

1. Are you a Hartford resident? Yes No

If yes, what is your zip code? 06103 06105 06106 06112 06114 06120 Other: _____

2. Are you familiar with the term “food policy?” Yes No

3. Food policies can be used by city leaders and residents in many ways to help community members access healthy food and eat healthfully. Food policy can address many topics, such as those found in the list below.

Please tell us how important each of the following are to you and your family. (Mark one answer for each)

		Not at all Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
a	Having a community garden or urban farm in my neighborhood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b	Having a grocery store I can walk to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c	Having a farmer’s market in my neighborhood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d	Helping city food retailers, bodegas and corner stores sell fresh fruits and vegetables and healthier items	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e	Having healthy items and fruit and vegetables available at food pantries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f	Having more restaurants that serve healthy foods in my neighborhood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g	Making fruit and vegetables, and healthy items less expensive and more available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PLEASE FLIP OVER TO QUESTIONS ON THE BACK OF THE PAGE →→→

Please tell us how important each of the following are to you and your family. (Circle one answer for each)

		Not at all Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
h	Making it easier to enroll in SNAP or WIC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i	Making sure children eat breakfast in school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j	Having more places for children to eat for free in the summer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k	Serving healthy foods at childcare centers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Are there other food policy issues that are also important to you? Please explain below

5. Having access to healthy food is a primary concern for me and my family.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither disagree nor agree Agree Strongly Agree

6. Did you know that Hartford has an Advisory Commission on Food Policy that helps the Mayor and City Council make healthy food available? Yes No

7. The Commission consists of Hartford residents and members of organizations that focus on nutrition, hunger, and agriculture. What would you like to see the Commission do to help make healthy food available in your neighborhood?

8. Would you be interested in attending a Commission meeting, held the second Wednesday of every month at 3:30pm at the Hartford Public Library? Yes No

Thank you for your help!

City official survey

City Official Survey Administration and Analysis Plan Protocol

CITY OFFICIAL SURVEY ON FOOD POLICY

Participant name:

Title:

Department or Agency:

Date:

1. Does your department, agency, or Commission address any of the following (check all that apply):

- Food access
- Food economic assistance programs
- Feeding programs, such as school breakfast and summer meal service
- Land use as it relates to gardening, farming, and/or raising animals
- Nutrition and diet
- Nutrition education
- Health issues related to nutrition and diet
- Food retail
- Food safety
- Serving and selling food to the public
- Business development, including food industry
- Other

If you selected "other," please explain

2. Did you know that Hartford has an Advisory Commission on Food Policy that advises the Mayor, City Council, and other City departments and agencies on matters related to hunger and the food system? Yes No

3. Have you met with the Commission or any Commissioners in conducting your work? Yes No

If yes, who and what was the nature of your interaction? _____

4. Are you aware that the Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy releases an Annual Report with recommendations? Yes No

5. Have you referred to the Annual Report in your work? Yes No

6. Would you be interested in working with a liaison from the Advisory Commission on Food Policy to identify ways to work together? Yes No

7. Would you be interested in attending a Commission meeting, held the second Wednesday of every month at 3:30pm at the Hartford Public Library? Yes No

Thank you for your help!

Organizational survey

Organizational Survey Administration and Analysis Plan Protocol

SURVEY ON HARTFORD ADVISORY COMMISSION ON FOOD POLICY

Participant name:

Title:

Organization:

Date:

1. Does your organization address any of the following (check all that apply):

- Food access
- Food economic assistance programs
- Feeding programs, such as school breakfast and summer meal service
- Land use as it relates to gardening, farming, and/or raising animals
- Nutrition and diet
- Nutrition education
- Health issues related to nutrition and diet
- Food retail
- Food safety
- Serving and selling food to the public
- Business development, including food industry
- Other

If you selected "other," please explain

2. Did you know that Hartford has an Advisory Commission on Food Policy that advises the Mayor, City Council, and other City departments and agencies on matters related to the food system? Yes No

3. Have you met with the Commission or any Commissioners in conducting your work?
 Yes No

If yes, who and what was the nature of your interaction? _____

4. Are you aware that the Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy releases an Annual Report with recommendations? Yes No

5. Have you referred to the Annual Report in your work? Yes No

6. Would you be interested in working with a liaison from the Advisory Commission on Food Policy to identify ways to work together? Yes No

7. Would you be interested in attending a Commission meeting, held the second Wednesday of every month at 3:30pm at the Hartford Public Library? Yes No

Thank you for your help!

Hartford City Ordinance No. 54-91

DIVISION 13. - ADVISORY COMMISSION ON FOOD POLICY

Sec. 2-326. - Created.

There is hereby created the advisory commission on food policy.

(Ord. No. 54-91, 10-15-91)

Sec. 2-327. - Purpose.

- (a) There shall be a policy to improve the availability of food to persons in need within the city, and there shall be a food policy advisory commission.
- (b) The purpose of the policy shall be to integrate all agencies of the city in a common effort to improve the availability of safe and nutritious food at reasonable prices for all residents, particularly those in need. The goals to be accomplished by the policy are:
 - (1) To ensure that a wide variety of safe and nutritious food is available for city residents;
 - (2) To ensure that access to the safe and nutritious food is not limited by economic status, location or other factors beyond a resident's control; and
 - (3) To ensure that the price of food in the city remains reasonably close to the average price existing in the balance of the state.
- (c) The policy shall be implemented by the city as follows:
 - (1) *Transportation.* In planning, providing, coordinating and regulating transportation within the city, city agencies shall make the facilitation of transportation of food to distribution points and ready access to a reasonable food supply a principal part of any such action.
 - (2) *Direct service.* City agencies and employees providing food or the financial means of obtaining food shall plan, execute and evaluate such programs and actions in order to achieve maximum efficiency in providing food and to assure that such programs are reaching the residents in need of them.
 - (3) *Land use.* City agencies and employees in determining the use to be made of city parks, school yards, rights-of-way, surplus properties and redevelopment parcels shall give special consideration to the benefit of using such sites, at least in part, for food production, processing and distribution. The city, on a regional level, shall act to preserve farmland for truck farming which will serve as a nearby source of fresh fruit, vegetables, eggs and milk.
 - (4) *Lobbying and advocacy.* The city in its presentations before state and federal legislatures, state and regional agencies and anti-hunger organizations shall stress the need for programs and actions which will improve the opportunities of city residents to obtain adequate diets. Such programs and actions shall include maintenance of the state and regional agricultural infrastructure.
 - (5) *Referrals to social services.* City social service workers shall be especially diligent in referring persons in need of available sources of food best suited for their needs.
 - (6) *Education.* The city in providing a wide range of educational opportunities for adults shall emphasize the importance of a sound diet for the family and provide courses in the production, selection, purchase, preparation and preservation of food.

- (7) *Business development.* The city in its work of developing new businesses and expanding existing businesses shall give priority to those food-related businesses improving access to affordable and nutritional food.
- (8) *Operational and health inspections.* The city in its role of maintaining the quality and healthfulness of the food supply shall take into account that licensing and inspection can seriously burden small businesses, and a policy shall be followed providing a reasonable balance between protection of the food supply and the negative financial impact upon needed food-related small businesses.
- (9) *Direct and indirect purchase of food.* The city government, in its role as a major food purchaser from local outlets, and administrator of food assistance programs, shall consider that its purchasing decisions can affect the viability of producers and vendors, and shall consider such impact in making purchasing decisions.
- (10) *Support of private efforts.* The city in providing funding for private efforts to assist people in obtaining food and in communicating with organizations engaged in such private efforts shall encourage, promote and maximize such efforts.
- (11) *Emergency food supplies.* The city in its emergency planning function shall provide for an adequate reserve supply of food to be available at reasonable prices if the city's and region's supply of food were to be interrupted and shall periodically reassess its ability to provide such special supply.
- (12) *Monitoring and communicating data.* The city shall continuously collect data on the extent and nature of public food programs and hunger in the city and shall quarterly issue a report with findings and recommendations to the food policy advisory commission.
- (13) *Administration.* The city manager in administering the affairs of the city shall seek ways of improving the means of providing persons in need with wholesome food and diets and shall work with the commission to combat hunger in attaining its goals.
- (14) *Intergovernmental cooperation.* The food policy advisory commission shall have the cooperation of all departments in the city in the performance of its duties. All departments shall supply the commission with all information and reports requested in order that the goals of the city and the commission may be realized. The city shall provide clerical services to the commission as needed.

(Ord. No. 54-91, 10-15-91)

Sec. 2-328. - Membership.

The food policy advisory commission shall consist of fifteen (15) members who shall serve for three-year terms without compensation and be appointed by the mayor, with the approval of the council. Of the fifteen (15) members first appointed, five (5) shall be appointed for terms of one (1) year, five (5) for terms of two (2) years and five (5) for terms of three (3) years. Of the fifteen (15) members, one (1) shall be the city manager or his/her designee, nine (9) of such members shall be persons actively engaged in programs for combating hunger and improving the production, processing and distribution of food to persons in need and shall include representatives from the food, industry, consumers, dietitians, the city administration and public and private nonprofit food providers, and five (5) of such members shall be persons chosen from the public at large. City employees and persons not residing in the city shall be eligible for membership in the commission. The mayor shall annually designate one (1) member to act as chairperson. The commission shall meet at least once per month. A quorum shall consist of eight (8) members. The mayor, director of social services and director of health, or their

designees, shall be ex officio members of the commission with the right to vote. Members and officers shall serve until their successors are appointed.

(Ord. No. 54-91, 10-15-91)

Sec. 2-329. - Goals of commission.

The goals of the food policy advisory commission shall be as follows:

- (1) To eliminate hunger as an obstacle to a happy, healthy and productive life in the city;
- (2) To ensure that a wide variety of safe and nutritious food is available for city residents;
- (3) To ensure that access to food is not limited by economic status, location or other factors beyond a resident's control;
- (4) To ensure that the price of food in the city remains at a level approximating the level for the state.

(Ord. No. 54-91, 10-15-91)

Sec. 2-330. - Powers and duties of the commission.

The powers and duties of the food policy advisory commission shall be as follows:

- (1) Explore new means for the city government to improve food economy and the availability, accessibility and quality of food and to assist the city government in the coordination of its efforts;
- (2) Collect and monitor data pertaining to the nutrition status of city residents;
- (3) Seek and obtain community input on food economy and the availability, accessibility and quality of food to persons in need within the city;
- (4) Obtain updated statistical information and other data from city agencies relating to hunger in the city and programs in existence and being planned to reduce hunger and improve the obtaining of nutritious food by residents in need;
- (5) Observe and analyze the existing administration of city food distribution programs; and
- (6) Recommend to the city administration adoption of new programs and improvements to (or elimination of) existing programs as appropriate.
- (7) Submit an annual report on or before October 1 to the common council with copies to the mayor and city manager summarizing the progress made in achieving each of the goals set forth in section 2-329 above.

(Ord. No. 54-91, 10-15-91)