

Denver Food Systems: Food Waste

Safety, Housing, Education, and Homelessness Committee
July 27, 2022

Empowering Denver's communities to live better, longer



Agenda

Denver Food Vision 2030

- Targets + projects

Food Waste Prevention

- Project highlights: residents + restaurants
- What's next?

Cross-Agency Collaboration

Food Systems: 2022 & Beyond



Denver Food Vision

INCLUSIVE

HEALTHY

VIBRANT

RESILIENT

12 Goals

388 residents, 216 businesses, 22 focus groups

75% of positive changes from the plan benefit underserved & low-income neighborhoods

Adopted 2018 – through 2030



Released December 2016
Updated December 7, 2017



Inclusive

5 low-income communities reach goal of being a “Complete Food Neighborhood”

- *Food in Communities*
- *Neighborhood Planning Initiatives*
- *Denver Food Access Coalition*

Resilient

57% reduction in tons of residential food waste collected by the city

Preserve 99 acres agricultural production

- *Food Waste Prevention & Reduction*
- *Emergency Food Planning & Funding*
- *Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP)*

Targets & Projects

Healthy

75% of youth and adults eat at least 1 serving of fruits and vegetables/day

55% reduction in food insecure households

- *Healthy Food for Denver’s Kids*
- *Healthy Beverage Partnership*

Vibrant

59% increase in local Denver food economy

25% food bought is farmed or manufactured in CO by local sources

- *Healthy Corner Stores*
- *Denver Economic Development & Opportunity (DEDO) funding collaborations*

Food Waste = Resource Waste

Environmental Impacts of U.S. Food Waste: EPA

What resources go into a year of food loss and waste in the U.S.?

*excluding impacts of waste management, such as landfill methane emissions



Enough **greenhouse gas emissions** of more than 42 coal-fired power plants

Enough **water and energy** to supply more than 50 million homes

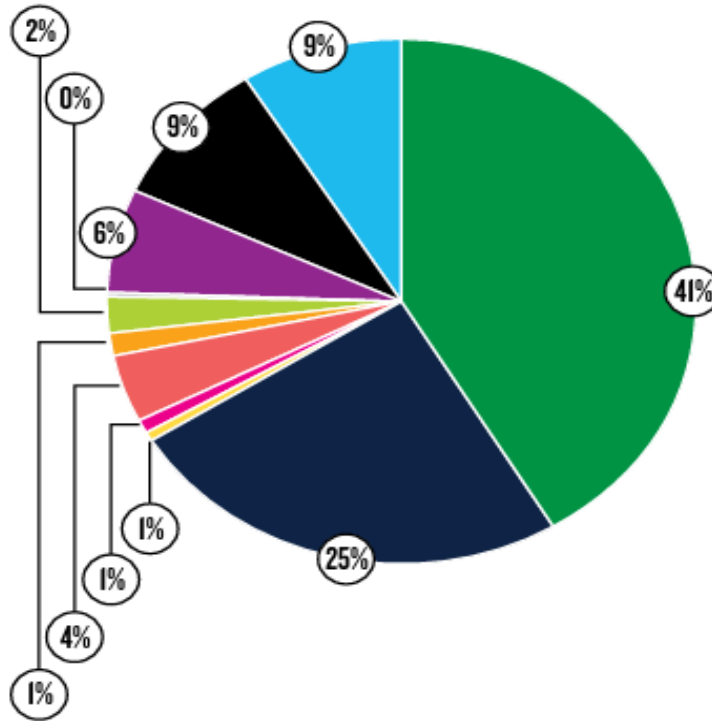


The **amount of fertilizer** used in the U.S. to grow all plant-based foods for U.S. human consumption

An **area of agricultural land** equal to California and New York



Where Is Food Wasted in Denver?



- Residential
- Restaurants & Caterers
- Colleges & Universities
- K-12 Schools
- Hospitality
- Health Care
- Events & Recreation Facilities
- Correctional Facilities
- Grocers & Markets
- Food Wholesalers & Distributors
- Food Manufacturing & Processing



Tackling Food Waste: Residents

Conducting residential
behavior change
campaign

Going beyond education to
change behavior



¡Adopte nuevos hábitos para ahorrar tiempo con los consejos y herramientas adjuntos para reducir el desperdicio de la comida!



Residential Waste Audits

On average, Denverites waste 14lbs food per household per week



Tackling Food Waste: City Staff

Save More, Waste Less Food Challenge:

- Staff took 2,428 actions
- 518 staff signed-up
- 600+ comments, 170+ photos

Food Waste Prevention Week

- Employee submission: how they reduce food waste at home



#FOODWASTE
PREVENTIONWEEK

Rebecca Currie

Denver Public Library

Today's lunch is all the leftovers in the fridge. Shrimp scampi, broccoli and a little chicken.



Tackling Food Waste: Restaurants

Restaurant challenges to prevent waste, increase composting and donations

- Challenge highlighted high diversion potential and creative use of scraps

Safe food donation and liability protection education



Restaurant Waste Audits

Large amounts of edible food in trash



What's Next? Residential

Leverage U.S. Conference of Mayors 2022 award

Focus groups to collect data on attitudes toward food waste across ethnicities and income levels

Expand food waste behavior change to prevent waste of edible food

Provide technical assistance to emergency food providers to increase donation of culturally appropriate food



What's Next? Restaurants

Interview restaurants to identify barriers to food donations

Develop and distribute materials to prevent waste of surplus food by increasing donations and knowledge of liability protection

Work with emergency food providers on rescue of wholesome surplus food

Collaborate with Climate Action, Sustainability & Resiliency (CASR) on restaurant food waste challenge



Food Access

Food Assistance

Totals:

Served Residents from Priority Neighborhoods?

Yes

Meals Distributed

5M

Food Boxes Provided

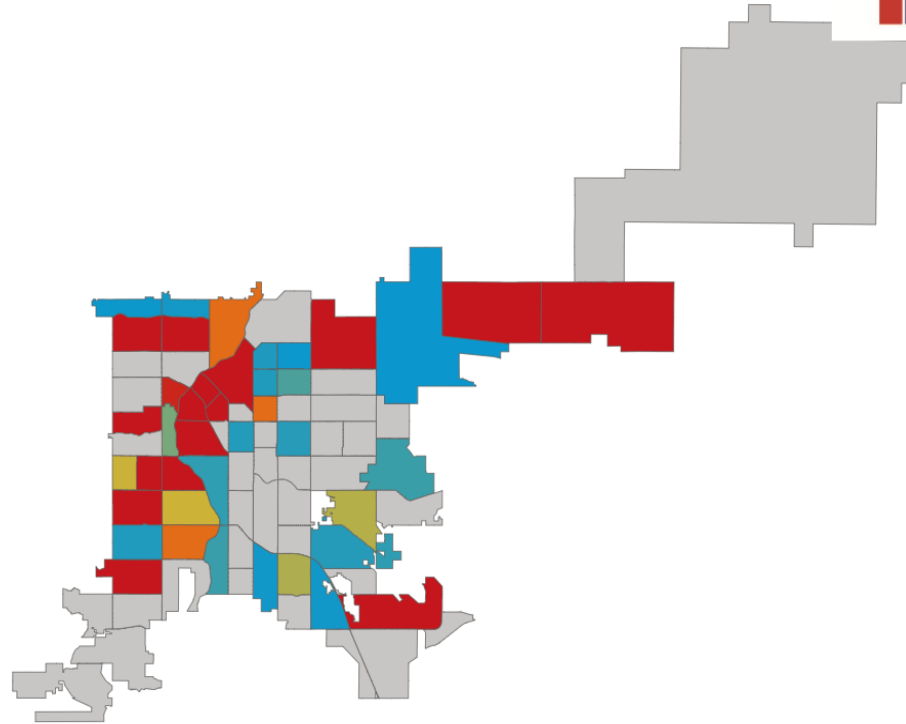
271K

Pounds of Food*

11M

Pounds of Food Distributed by Organization Location**

Hover over various neighborhoods for additional data



DENVER
PUBLIC HEALTH &
ENVIRONMENT



Sustainable Food Policy Council

Our mission is to influence policy that fosters food security for all community members and promotes a healthy, equitable, and sustainable local food system with consideration for economic vitality and environmental impact.

1. Promote and Oversee Progress on the Denver Food Vision and Action Plan
2. Advise City on Food-Related Plans, Reports, and Programs
3. Provide Recommendations to the Mayor on Regulations and Policies
4. Build public and political will to support innovation and positive policy changes within the food system



Food Interagency Group

Food Interagency Group (FIG) includes: DDPHE, CASR, CPD, DEDO, DHS, DOF, DPL, DPR, HOST, OCA, and DHHA

- Convened in 2021, built on emergency food coordination groups
- Addressing Food Now, Food Tomorrow, Food Later, Food Forever
- Reviewed food programs, communications, policies and budgets
- Recent city food budget (CARES, ARPA) has gone towards emergency food
→ Led to 2023 combined budget requests
- Seeking to make the city's food environment equitable and community empowered

INCLUSIVE

HEALTHY

VIBRANT

RESILIENT

Food Systems: 2022 & Beyond

Next Steps:

- Interagency group develops new Action Plan
- Create progress report on Denver Food Vision

Opportunities:

- Improve data measurement & tracking; Update food maps
- Adopt new policies to support food waste prevention & food access

Longer Term:

- Support Food Waste Prevention and Reduction & Food Climate impacts with CASR, Department of Transportation & Infrastructure (DOTI)
- Support Food Economy with Denver Economic Development & Opportunity (DEDO)
- Support Urban Agriculture with Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR), Community Planning and Development (CPD)
- Model food access in neighborhood plans





Questions & Discussion

Laine Cidlowski

Laine.Cidlowski@denvergov.org

Lesly Baesens

Lesly.baesens@denvergov.org

