

MFPC-DCFC UPDATE: FOOD SYSTEMS RECOVERY & RESILIENCE EVOLVES INTO FOOD PLAN WORK GROUP

When the Madison Food Policy Council (MFPC) and Dane County Food Council (DCFC) created joint Work Groups in the spring of 2020 to focus on the Covid-19 pandemic, the original proposal was an effort to address increased food insecurity, interruptions in supply chains, and work toward a more resilient food system. See [Framework Document](#).

Of the four Work Groups proposed in the original document, the Regional Agriculture and Food Sovereignty (RAFS) Work Group has followed its original mission and adopted Charter most closely; the others have evolved somewhat. Based on discussions during the summer among members who had volunteered to serve on the Pandemic Food Relief and Food Access Work Groups, a merger was proposed to create the Food Access Relief & Economic Support (FARES) Work Group. This recommendation was approved along with a Charter in August 2020.

The Food Systems Recovery & Resilience (FSR2) Work Group was created to explore the “longstanding systemic barriers” that made responding to challenges in the food system. See [Charter FSR2](#). This Work Group held three meetings in 2020, discussed potential projects, formed two sub-groups – (1) Food Enterprise Recovery and Resilience, and (2) Strategic Investment Opportunities – and planned how meetings would proceed in 2021. In February 2021, the group reported it was “working on updates to the plan of work, including preparation for food system planning efforts,” and its Chair Bill Warner explored creating a new Work Group that would invite new members willing to commit to a demanding schedule at least for the first few months. The new Work Group would not be responsible for writing a regional food systems plan, but would develop a process and community engagement strategies.

The new “Food Plan Work Group” convened on March 31, met six additional times in April and May, and has submitted a request for funding to the County Executive’s office to assess the Dane County Food System and what can be learned from the pandemic response. This study could contribute to a regional food systems plan (in compliance with the City’s Comprehensive Plan) when the funding and structure are in place.

The new Work Group is being staffed by Jess Guffey Calkins, Extension Dane County. The Work Group is comprised of DCFC members Bill Warner (WG chair), Donale Richards, Marcia Caton Campbell, Sheena Tesch, and Dan Cornelius; MFPC members Chris Brockel, Lindsey Day Farnsworth, Rebecca Kemble, Sarah Larson, and Erica Anderson; and community stakeholders Nan Fey, Susan Hessel, Marcia Kasieta, Helen Sarakinos, Abha Thakkar, Katherine Pensack, and Will Fulwider.

In order to clarify the public record, two official actions need to be taken:

1. Update the FSR2 Work Group Charter to indicate the change in name and focus.
2. Approve the updated Charter reflecting the new name and focused mission of the Food Plan Work Group.

Copies of both Charters are linked and will be attached to the MFPC-DCFC Agenda for 6/8/21.