AN IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE
FOR THE
AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY FOOD PLAN

A Graduate Capstone Project

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Capstone Project: An Implementation Guide for the Austin/Travis County Food Plan

Objective: To provide recommendations for facilitating implementation strategies that ultimately lead to the realization of the Food Plan Vision.
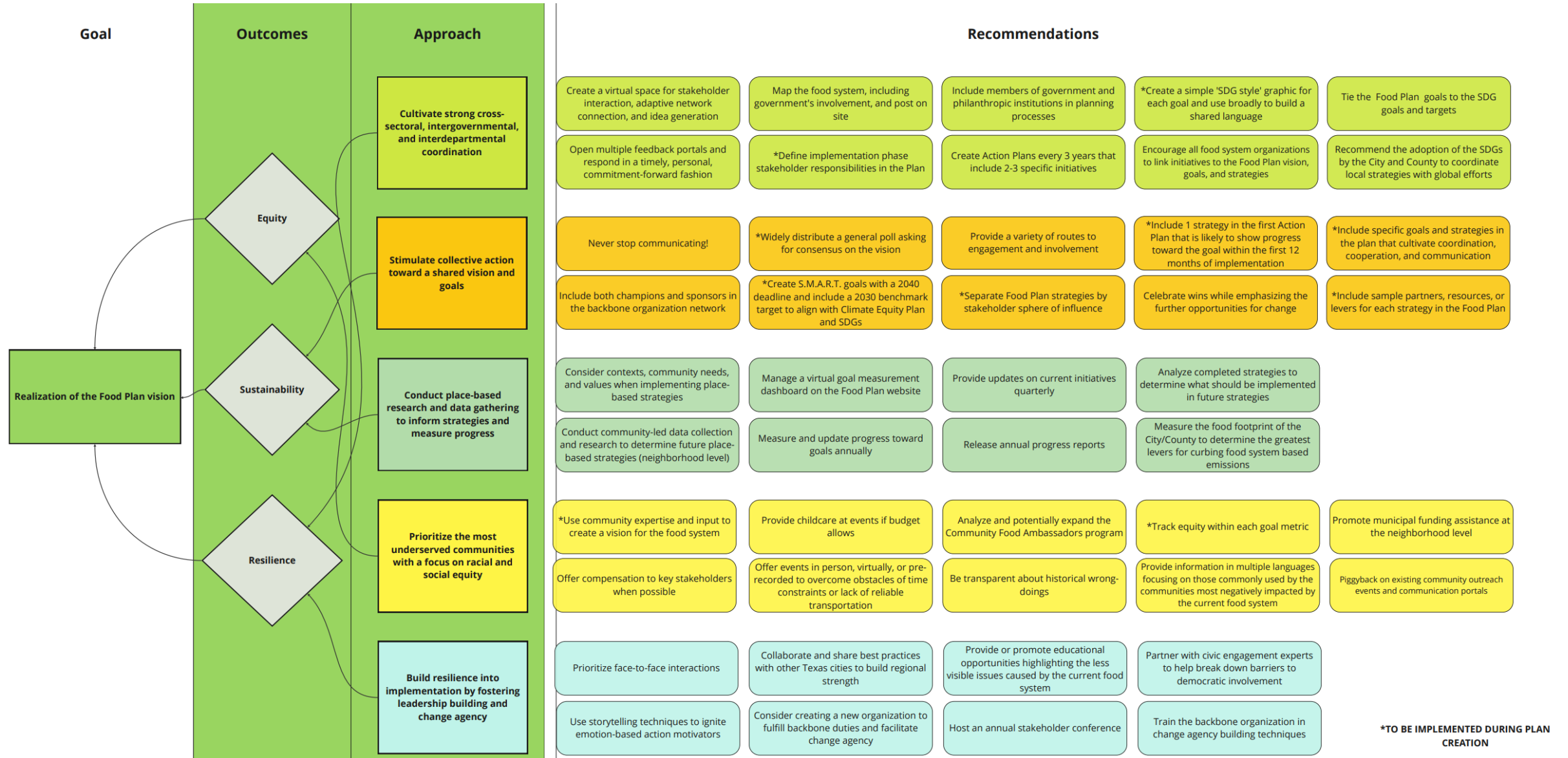
Topics included in the Guide:
- Suggested Timeline
- Stakeholder Management
- Governance
- Performance Management
- Potential Funding Resources
- Sustainability Goals
- Opportunities, Risks, and Mitigation Strategies

Areas of Research:
- Other food plans
- Food Policy Councils
- Social/Civic capital
- Backbone organizations/Collective Impact
- Cross-sector collaboration
- Leading transformation
- Food democracy
- Food justice movements
- Implementation strategies of other plan types
- Food policy
- Food system governance
- Grassroots organization

Theory of Change

Goal

Realization of the Food Plan vision

Outcomes

- Equity
- Sustainability
- Resilience

Approach

- Cultivate strong cross-sectoral, intergovernmental, and interdepartmental coordination
- Stimulate collective action toward a shared vision and goals
- Conduct place-based research and data gathering to inform strategies and measure progress
- Prioritize the most underserved communities with a focus on racial and social equity
- Build resilience into implementation by fostering leadership building and change agency

Recommendations

Create a virtual space for stakeholder interaction, adaptive network connection, and idea generation	Map the food system, including government's involvement, and post on site	Include members of government and philanthropic institutions in planning processes	*Create a simple 'SDG style' graphic for each goal and use broadly to build a shared language	Tie the Food Plan goals to the SDG goals and targets
Open multiple feedback portals and respond in a timely, personal, commitment-forward fashion	*Define implementation phase stakeholder responsibilities in the Plan	Create Action Plans every 3 years that include 2-3 specific initiatives	Encourage all food system organizations to link initiatives to the Food Plan vision, goals, and strategies	Recommend the adoption of the SDGs by the City and County to coordinate local strategies with global efforts
Never stop communicating!	*Widely distribute a general poll asking for consensus on the vision	Provide a variety of routes to engagement and involvement	*Include 1 strategy in the first Action Plan that is likely to show progress toward the goal within the first 12 months of implementation	*Include specific goals and strategies in the plan that cultivate coordination, cooperation, and communication
Include both champions and sponsors in the backbone organization network	*Create S.M.A.R.T. goals with a 2040 deadline and include a 2030 benchmark target to align with Climate Equity Plan and SDGs	*Separate Food Plan strategies by stakeholder sphere of influence	Celebrate wins while emphasizing the further opportunities for change	*Include sample partners, resources, or levers for each strategy in the Food Plan
Consider contexts, community needs, and values when implementing place-based strategies	Manage a virtual goal measurement dashboard on the Food Plan website	Provide updates on current initiatives quarterly	Analyze completed strategies to determine what should be implemented in future strategies	
Conduct community-led data collection and research to determine future place-based strategies (neighborhood level)	Measure and update progress toward goals annually	Release annual progress reports	Measure the food footprint of the City/County to determine the greatest levers for curbing food system based emissions	
*Use community expertise and input to create a vision for the food system	Provide childcare at events if budget allows	Analyze and potentially expand the Community Food Ambassadors program	*Track equity within each goal metric	Promote municipal funding assistance at the neighborhood level
Offer compensation to key stakeholders when possible	Offer events in person, virtually, or pre-recorded to overcome obstacles of time constraints or lack of reliable transportation	Be transparent about historical wrong-doings	Provide information in multiple languages focusing on those commonly used by the communities most negatively impacted by the current food system	Piggyback on existing community outreach events and communication portals
Prioritize face-to-face interactions	Collaborate and share best practices with other Texas cities to build regional strength	Provide or promote educational opportunities highlighting the less visible issues caused by the current food system	Partner with civic engagement experts to help break down barriers to democratic involvement	
Use storytelling techniques to ignite emotion-based action motivators	Consider creating a new organization to fulfill backbone duties and facilitate change agency	Host an annual stakeholder conference	Train the backbone organization in change agency building techniques	

*TO BE IMPLEMENTED DURING PLAN CREATION

Implementation Vision and Approach Objectives

Vision:

The realization of a food system that is
- Equitable
- Sustainable
- Resilient

Implementation Approach Objectives

Cultivate strong cross-sectoral, intergovernmental, and interdepartmental coordination

Stimulate collective action toward a shared vision and goals

Conduct place-based research and data gathering to inform strategies and measure progress

Prioritize the most underserved communities with a focus on racial and social equity

Build resilience into implementation by fostering leadership building and change agency
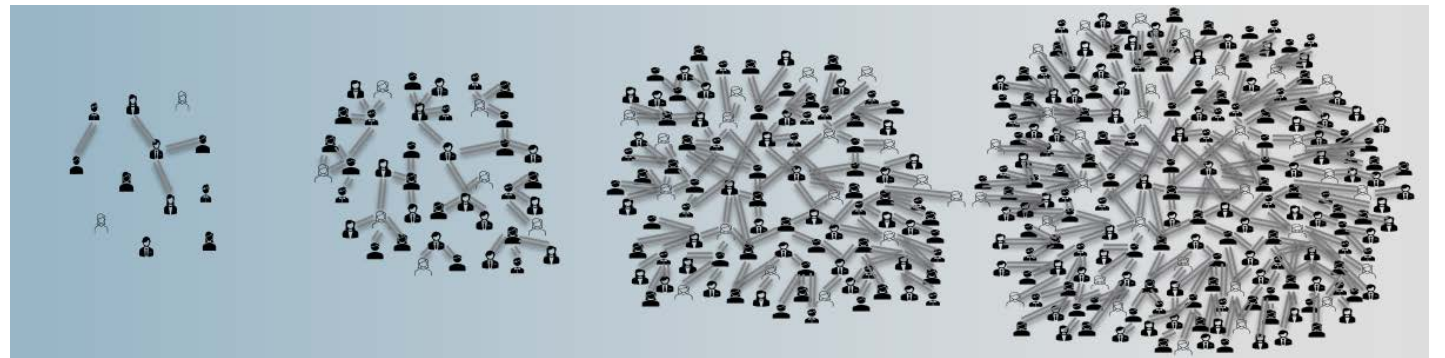
Food Plan Analysis

Location	Plan	Communication appears to be current and ongoing (Y/N)	Total Y Responses
Denver, CO, USA	Denver Food Vision 2030	N	10
Edmonton, Canada	Fresh: Edmonton's Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy	N	8
London, UK	The London Food Strategy	N	8
Multnomah County, OR, USA	Multnomah Food Action Plan: Grow and Thrive 2025	N	5
New York City, NY, USA	Food Forward NYC: A 10-year Food Policy Plan	N	7
Greater Philadelphia area	Eating Here: The Greater Philadelphia Food System Plan	N	9
Pittsburgh, PA area	Greater Pittsburgh Food Action Plan	Y/N	9
Rhode Island, USA	Relish Rhody: Rhode Island Food Strategy	Y/N	8
San Diego County, CA, USA	San Diego County Food Vision 2030	Y	9
Santa Barbara County, CA, USA	Santa Barbara County Food Action Plan	Y	4
Seattle, WA, USA	City of Seattle Food Action Plan	N	4
Vancouver, Canada	What Feeds Us: Vancouver Food Strategy	N	8
Vermont, USA	Vermont Agriculture & Food System Strategic Plan	Y	9

Thirteen 'Yes' or 'No' Attributes Used in the Food Plan Analysis	% of Y responses
1) Clear Vision	77%
2) Priorities for External Partners Suggested	23%
3) Strategies Linked to Specific Stakeholders When Possible	85%
4) Strategies Clearly Tied to a Goal	100%
5) Implementation Mentioned	69%
6) Implementation Strategies Addressed	62%
7) Backbone Organization Assigned	62%
8) Funding Opportunities Mentioned	85%
9) Timeline Established for Goal Achievement	46%
10) Timeline Established for Specific Strategies	23%
11) Metrics for Goal Evaluation Identified	85%
12) Goal Graphics Created	15%
13) Communication Appears to be Current and Ongoing	23%

Consider creating a new organization to fulfill backbone duties and facilitate change agency

Governance

Food Plan Analysis Results

	Backbone Organization Tasks
1	
2	Communicate through all portals using storytelling techniques
3	Monitor feedback portals
4	Implement Action Plan strategies
5	Perform analyses of strategy success
6	Maintain relationships with key stakeholders
7	Advocate for beneficial food policy
8	Seek cross-sector collaboration and alignment
9	Empower leaders and change-makers
10	Release annual Food Plan status reports
11	Update the goal progress dashboard annually
12	Host an annual stakeholder conference
13	Host education, networking, and stakeholder collaboration events
14	Lead data gathering efforts to inform future strategies
15	Lead efforts to release a new action plan every 2-3 years
16	Secure Funding for Food Plan initiatives and backbone organization support
17	Monitor a virtual stakeholder hub

Location	Communication appears to be current and ongoing (Y/N)	Backbone Organization Type	Backbone Organization
Denver, CO, USA	N	FPC (civic)	Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council
Edmonton, Canada	N	FPC (civic)	Edmonton Food Council
London, UK	N	FPC (civic) and City staff	London Food Board and the City of London Mayor's Office
Multnomah County, OR, USA	N	Unclear - may have been FPC (civic) but was dissolved in 2012	
New York City, NY, USA	N	City Staff	New York City Mayor's Office
Greater Philadelphia area	N	Regional Planning Commission and Food System Stakeholder Committee	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission - with Greater Philadelphia Food System Stakeholder Committee
Pittsburgh, PA area	Y/N	FPC (NP)	Pittsburgh Food Policy Council
Rhode Island, USA	Y/N	FPC (NP)	Rhode Island Food Policy Council
San Diego County, CA, USA	Y	Food System Alliance (NP)	San Deigo Food System Alliance
Santa Barbara County, CA, USA	Y	Food Action Network (NP)	Santa Barbara County Food Action Network
Seattle, WA, USA	N	City Staff	City of Seattle
Vancouver, Canada	N	FPC (civic)	Vancouver Food Policy Council and City Staff
Vermont, USA	Y	Food Action Network (NP)	Farm to Plate Network

Milestones and Timeline

*Create S.M.A.R.T. goals with a 2040 deadline and include a 2030 benchmark target to align with Climate Equity Plan and SDGs

Create Action Plans every 3 years that include 2-3 specific initiatives

Manage a virtual goal measurement dashboard on the Food Plan website
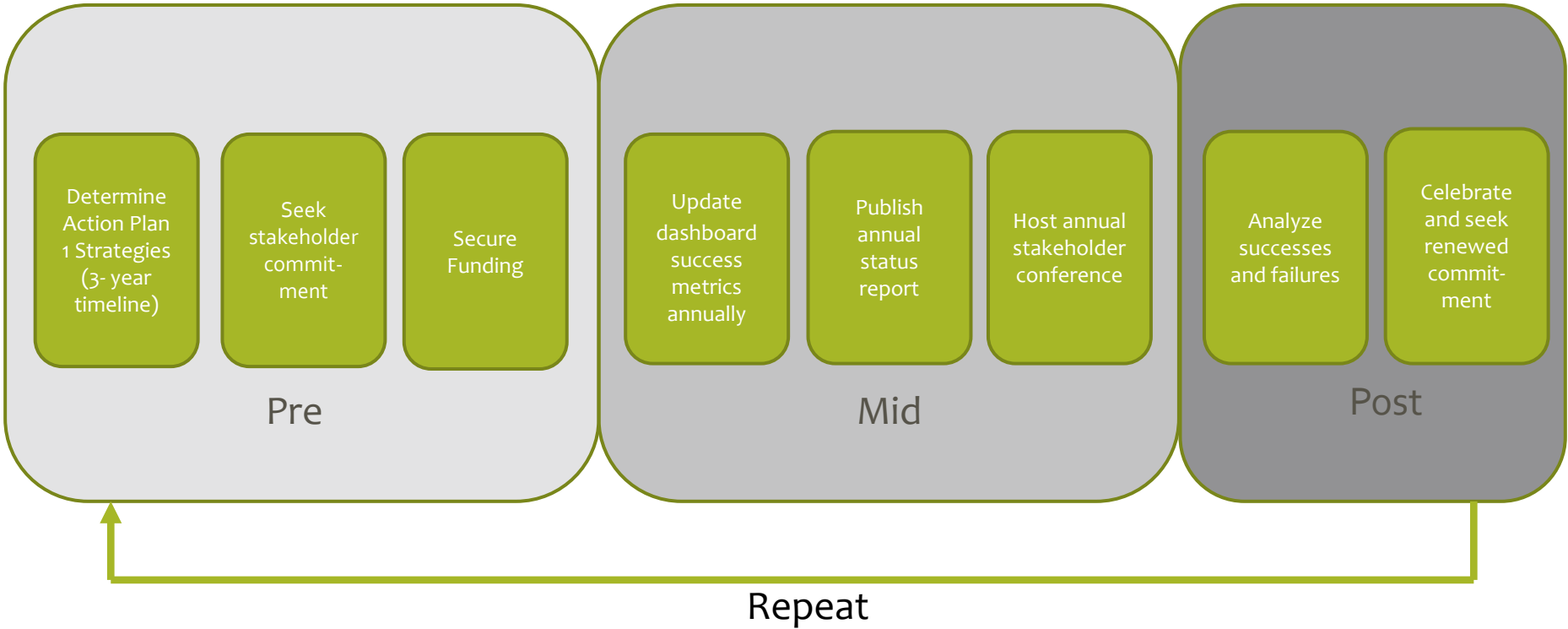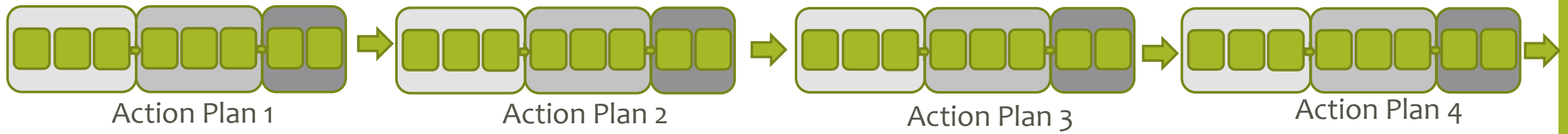
Measure and update progress toward goals annually

Release annual progress reports

Host an annual stakeholder conference

Implementation Phase
Action Plan 1

Pre
- Determine Action Plan 1 Strategies (3- year timeline)
- Seek stakeholder commit-ment
- Secure Funding

Mid
- Update dashboard success metrics annually
- Publish annual status report
- Host annual stakeholder conference

Post
- Analyze successes and failures
- Celebrate and seek renewed commit-ment

Repeat

Action Plan 1 → Action Plan 2 → Action Plan 3 → Action Plan 4

Communicating Transparently

Storytelling

Breaking Down Barriers to Engagement

Providing Resources

Sharing Best Practices
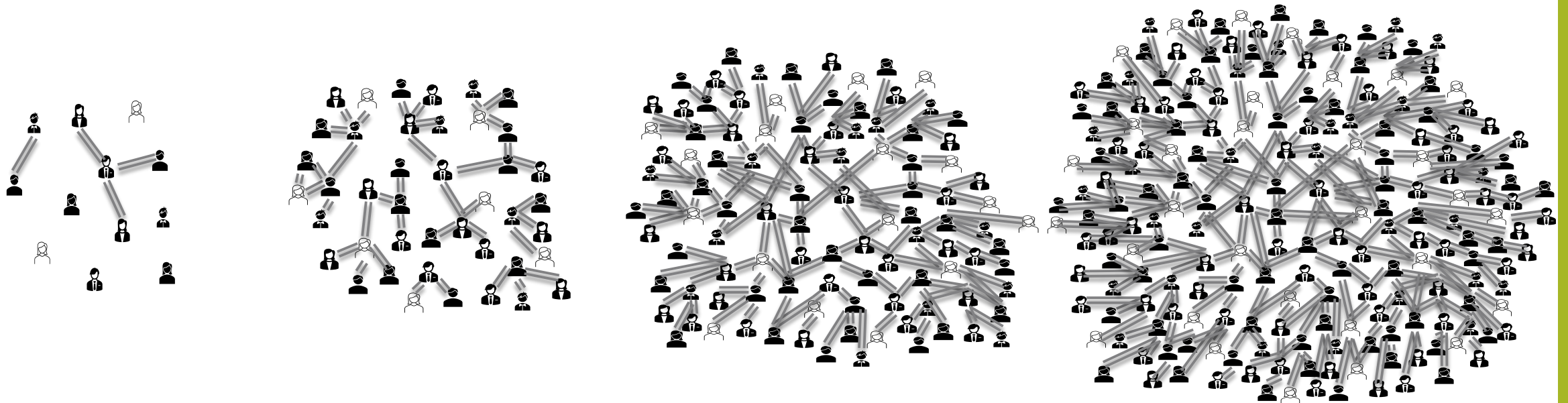
Recommendation Highlights – Plan Design

*Include specific goals and strategies in the plan that cultivate coordination, cooperation, and communication

*Separate Food Plan strategies by stakeholder sphere of influence

GOAL 5
Support the systems and knowledge to implement the 10-year food policy plan.

5A. Strengthen community engagement and cross-sector coordination around the development and implementation of food policy.

5B. Create and share knowledge about the food system.

Adapted from: The City of New York. (2022). *Food Forward NYC: a 10 year food policy plan.* New York: The City of New York.

OBJECTIVE 09
Build a Local, Sustainable, and Equitable Food Movement

STRATEGIES AT A GLANCE

- Support coordinated efforts and collaboration to build a local, sustainable, and equitable food movement
- Reconnect urban and rural communities
- Increase food system education and storytelling
- Build community power

Adapted from: San Diego Food System Alliance. (2021). *San Diego County Food Vision 2030.* San Diego: San Diego Food System Alliance.

Good Food for Pregnancy and Childhood – what you can do

If you are eligible for Healthy Start vouchers ask your health visitor, midwife or GP about applying for them to support your family to eat well.

Encourage your child's nursery or childminder to work towards a Healthy Early Years London Award and to comply with the Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England.

Encourage your local school to work towards a Healthy Schools London and/or Food for Life Award and introduce whole-school food policies.

Take an interest in the food your child eats at school, encourage your child's school to become 'water-only' and if eligible, apply for free school meals.

Adapted from: Greater London Authority. (2018). *The London Food Strategy: Healthy and Sustainable Food for London.* London: Greater London Authority.

Recommendation Highlights – Network Growth

Ganz, M. (2014). *Organizing: People, Power, Change p11.*

- Train backbone organization in change agency building techniques
- Use storytelling techniques to ignite emotion-based action motivators
- Never stop communicating!
- Provide a variety of routes to engagement and involvement
- Open multiple feedback portals and respond in a timely, personal, commitment forward fashion
- Create a virtual space for stakeholder interaction, adaptive network connection, and idea generation
- Map food system, including government's involvement, and post on site

SUPPORT F2P | ACCOUNT LOG IN | JOIN THE NETWORK

The Plan   The Network   Resources & Stories   Events, News & Jobs   Data & Outcomes   Food System Map

Farm to Plate. (n.d.). *The Plan* . Retrieved from Farm to Plate: https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/

STORYTELLING

According to collective impact research data, storytelling is the most effective form of measuring a network's impact. SBCFAN equitably elevates food system stories for those who would not have the means or time to capture them on their own. These stories initiate new working groups, identify policy gaps and barriers, and are used by the storytellers as education and marketing tools.

20 storytelling videos

23 success stories

2,000,000 dollars raised for Network members

Santa Barbara County Food Action Network. (n.d.). *Current Work*. Retrieved from Santa Barbara County Food Action Network: https://www.sbcfoodaction.org/case-for-support/

References

Chupp, S. (2023). *An Implementation Guide for the Austin/Travis County Food Plan.*

Ganz, M. (2014). *Organizing: People, Power, Change.*

Greater London Authority. (2018). *The London Food Strategy: Healthy and Sustainable Food for London.* London: Greater London Authority.

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Thank you!