

BRIDGING DIVIDES:

A COLLABORATIVE REGIONAL VISION
OF A MORE EQUITABLE FOOD SYSTEM
FOR PRODUCERS AND IMPROVED
COMMUNITY ACCESS TO LOCAL FOODS



INCREASING MARKET ACCESS FOR FOOD
PRODUCERS, FOSTERING REGIONAL
ECONOMIC STABILITY AND GROWTH,
AND ALLEVIATING FOOD INSECURITIES.

[WATCH "OREGON HEART TO TABLE" VIDEO TRAILER HERE](#)



HIGH LEVEL VISION

Our vision propels us from the crossroads of the early 21st century, building upon the foundation of our regional identity to bring greater diversity and equity to not only our food producers but the overall health of our region.

Our vision of our future food system is one that provides infrastructure, cooperative marketing and distribution in a way that small and mid-sized producers can access with less risk and capturing more market share than they could on their own. It includes a network of centralized food hubs and local feeder hubs with a defined mission to lessen the costs of cold storage, education, marketing, distribution, and processing, increasing the value producers can capture of food dollars while improving access to high quality, nutritious food in our communities. Because the same systems can benefit many small and mid-scale producers, the efficiencies allow local food to better permeate schools, hospitals and grocers, further improving economic resilience while strengthening the pride and connection people have to their land base and waterways.

By 2050 Northwest Oregon leads our state and nation as a vibrant, inspiring model for sustainable and regenerative food production that spans land and sea based operations.

With a culture of connected balance, traditional industries and diverse stakeholders have joined collaboratively and have created a social and environmental ecosystem with clean water, renewed and productive soils, protected wild spaces, and happier, healthier, hopeful people.

Our people's vision is active, actionable, and produces results across the entire socio-economic landscape. Our communities have enough housing, food, and energy to sustain us and help support our neighboring regions. Our population consists of creative, positive thinkers, dreamers and change makers. Spurred by a supportive and responsive political framework and an environment of innovation, developers are reaching new heights in technological advances that improve efficiency, reduce waste and increase productivity for the food industry at every scale.

An increasing number of our next generation's farmers, ranchers, and fishers see themselves as stewards of the local cultural and natural environment and have a clear, viable path to asset ownership, access to resources, and participation in food production.

This collaboration is real and has renewed our pride and belief in ourselves and our region, generating gratitude and optimism for the future. An efficient communications channel has evolved within the food sector, and the engaged dialogue that began at the local level has sparked momentum on a wider scale as communities across the globe exchange ideas, successes and passion for a healthier, more resilient world.





BRIDGING THE DIVIDE FROM TODAY TO TOMORROW

IN 2020, WE STOOD ON THE BRINK.

Mounting costs and challenges were diminishing producers' viability and will to provide local food for our tables. Yet a spark of hope pulsed with a brilliant, steady cadence, ready to ignite into a full, vibrant flame. This flame would sweep across our region with wild abandon, inspiring innovation in technology, precision logistics, public health, community collaboration and greater ecological consciousness that would grow quickly into a roaring, vital, all-encompassing energy. This bright hope would burn our minds clean to dream anew, illuminating in us a new and common Vision, rebuilding trust and ambition – bringing together divided communities, social classes and industries.

The next 30 years would see our home preserved, cherished and regenerated in ways we could never have imagined. We would gradually witness a complete transformation in our food system, see fallow fields come alive, watersheds restored, new habitat management strategies to protect our wild resources. Incredible advances in sustainable energy emerged. Businesses rallied for policy changes that lead to affordable distribution of nutritionally dense foods, contributing to lower health care cost, higher achievements in k-12 learning and better quality of life for all.



IT WAS OUR DESTINY.

In 2050, we remember with appreciation the discomforts that caused a sudden and dramatic shift in political, environmental and social paradigms. 2020: our capacity was overstretched. Many people in the community wore multiple hats: running a business, raising a family, serving on multiple committees, port commissions or city councils; attending evening community meetings and advisory groups after hard days of work on the waterfront, in the fields or deep in the wild mountains; going to bed bone-tired but waking up to beautiful mornings in a beautiful land and remembering why they love to live here.

For years, community partners, leaders and laymen had been pulling together a wide berth of efforts to revitalize our region. Decades of study, consistent, inclusive stakeholder engagement, community listening sessions and scientific research had provided insight and foundation for wide-scale change. Government officials, economic leaders, and citizens from every walk of life were actively engaged on a wide set of issues revolving around a common theme: improving the resiliency and quality of life for our people - today and tomorrow.

It felt like the odds were stacked against us, but we learned from other models of change across the world, developing our own community engagement strategies to tackle local issues. As example, Oregon's tourism industry was reorganizing into a sustainable economic engine that helped fuel food system change. Legislative changes allowed support of our local foods movement, protection of wild and sensitive natural areas, and make breakthroughs in transportation and emergency management plans. Oregon's unique approach to the visitor economy made waves internationally and helped re-instill local pride in our unique towns and landscapes.

The sweat, toil and investments were working. New heads were raising, reawakening, people were talking amongst each other, realizing they had more in common than not. It was a new beginning, and in 2020 we were catapulted into a true new vision of 20-20 clarity for the future.

We wanted more. We came out of planning mode and put every promising feasibility study to the test. We learned from our mistakes and shared an uncompromising spirit of optimism and resilience. Every success opened a door to more abundance for our families, friends, and neighbors. As stresses began to ease, people became more kind and giving toward one another. The spirit of poverty in our region began to lift.

Food system reform was the first catalyst for greater change. Sparked by the Rockefeller Foundation's 2020 challenge to define a future vision of hope, our communities took the opportunity to pool recent assessments on the local seafood value chain, food hub feasibility, housing needs, strategic visioning for tourism, and food insecurity together into a cohesive Food System Vision depicting our collaborative priorities, goals, gaps, and an actionable work plan.

Today in 2050, our vibrant regional Food System Vision is the product of that momentum and moment in time.



ECONOMICS

In 2050, our Food Hub Network serves diverse communities spanning all colors and cultures. A consistent baseline of sales helps producers grow and thrive, and high quality, healthful foods can reach all of our people. Stable markets allow producers to take risks and expand business models to utilize the full capacity of their assets. This increases the amount of available local foods and lowers prices for consumers.

With access to shared infrastructure in hip, convenient locations, producers experience less isolation, more efficiency. As producers capture more margin they are released from the need to sell at commodity prices. Increased profits allow workers to own their boats, fishing quotas, farms, and pasturelands. As pride in our local food system increases, we see a new generation interested in pursuing this lifestyle. Residents appreciate the social and ecological intersections of food and culture; communities rally to support each other in deeper ways. Social impact investing creates new wealth on local levels that improves conditions for all. Tourism marketing efforts inform and attract empathetic visitors who relish the opportunities to connect and spend money in the places they love.





DIET AND CULTURE

Collectively, our food ethos continues to evolve and local markets expand with niche retail options. Food producers dialogue with an informed community of eaters to advance an equitable food system. Consumer preference has shifted toward food raised in ethical and regenerative ways; laws ban single use packaging; food waste has been drastically reduced. Previously marginalized genders and communities of color have equal opportunities to access land, permits, and local food and our small towns blossom and grow.

Our population supports food entrepreneurs who create value-added products, craft beverages, and nutrient dense dishes in restaurants. Junk foods, soft drinks, and the like are passed over in favor of flavorful local fare produced by respected neighbors and community members. Local food is present in schools and our integrated Food Hub Network offers student extracurricular opportunities to work and learn in a system that honors ingredients and people. Citizens are connecting to our sea and landscapes to “eat with the ecosystem” through wild harvested foods and underutilized or invasive species. More families are cooking together and savoring unique local food sources, such as cockle and butter clams, wasabi, and grass-fed beef. Our community health care system takes a holistic approach, prescribing local healthy foods and serving the same to patients. Cases of diabetes, heart diseases and diet related ailments are at record lows.

Our Food Hub Network also provides community gathering space, where new and native food traditions are celebrated and where consumer and small business education, training, and development can occur, generating greater connectivity between people and producers. This inspires an environment where collaboration, innovation and sustainability become the new “normal”.

Many hubs feature retail components where consumers can learn about how food is grown/harvested, all while enjoying a beautiful meal or purchasing food to take home. Producers are inspired to engage in these venues to share how best practices contribute to ecological health and diversity of soils and fisheries, and how that is linked to nutrition and human health.

ENVIRONMENT & TECHNOLOGY

In 2050 technology has improved the bottom line for producers and frees them to continue doing what they do best on land and sea. Inventory management and fulfillment systems ensure full product traceability for consumers and provide greater efficiency for producers and distributors. Over the past 30 years, policy changes and subsidy shifts supporting small local food producers have blazed the trail for tech advancement and integration into mainstream use.

We are sharing and learning from cultures around the world and finding new ways to reduce food waste and carbon outputs. Advanced tech minimizes fish waste and utilizes animal waste to produce “green” by-products such as electricity, health and beauty products, biologically verdant composts, and fuels, creating a cleaner environment and recapturing lost value. Fishermen continue to work alongside scientists and policy makers to create innovations in fishing gear and help monitor fish stocks and changing oceans; oystermen collaborate with universities to mitigate acidic ocean conditions that still threaten a 150 year old aquaculture industry.

We continue to face threat from natural disasters, but informed chefs open our minds to the benefits of local, regenerative farming and pasture management methods that translate into improved nutrient cycling, restored soils and delicious food. Our Network has minimized the number of delivery vehicles on the road, allowing producers to spend more time growing items for our communities. The vehicles that are on the road are powered by green energy, reducing emissions and our overall carbon footprint.

POLICY & INNOVATION

Local food producers and community leaders have organized to shift state and federal policy to be more reflexive toward small, rural producers. Our legislative representatives embody a spirit of interconnectedness and find success in alleviating food insecurity and addressing emergency preparedness for disasters. Known for our can-do attitude, our region attracts skilled and compassionate investors, architects and developers who are creating beautiful, energy efficient multi-use spaces, providing more workforce housing and new business opportunities.

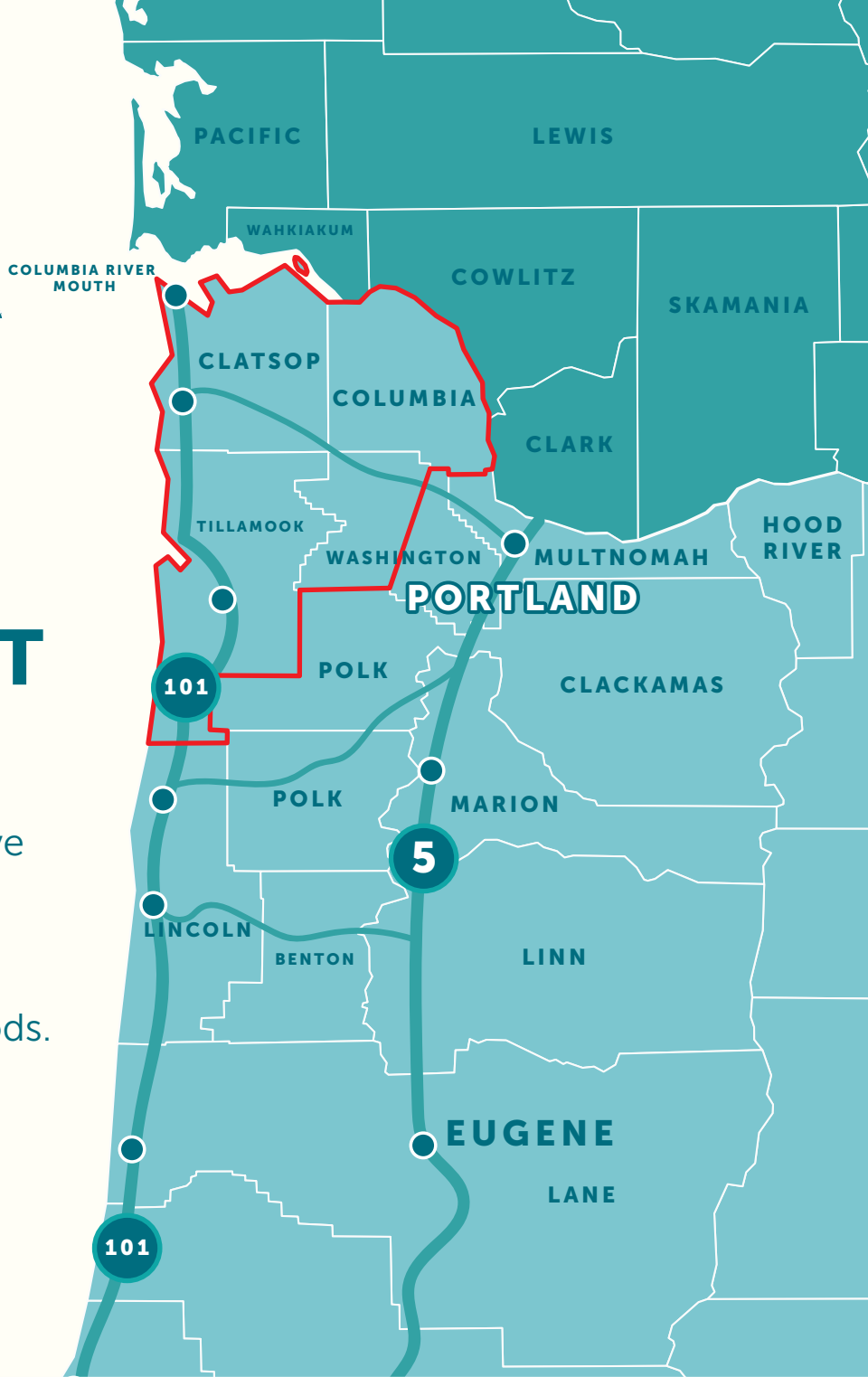




NORTHWEST OREGON

Bridging Divides: A collaborative regional vision of a more equitable food system for producers and improved community access to local foods.

One of Oregon's prominent features is its 363 miles of majestic coastline. Our Northwest region is composed of rural Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook, and western Washington Counties.



By 2050, our region has assembled a robust team of people and organizations encompassing the exact array of skills, knowledge, social/political capital, and staying power needed to accomplish our work. Collectively we have the foresight to anticipate needs, and institutionalize deep, long-lasting change in a way that fits the character and fabric of our community. We share a common vision and a common hope.

COMMUNITY BUILDING CONTINUES TO COMPOUND IN ELEGANT WAYS, GENERATING MEANINGFUL, LASTING WEALTH FOR OUR PEOPLE AND PLACE.