

Local from A1

grocery stories and developing community gardens.

During Cottage Grove's two-day workshop last week, participants worked together to contextualize the city's local food system and establish strategies.

With the overarching theme of building a resilient local/regional food system, participants discussed ideas for achieving four main goals: (1) identify strategies to support and enhance existing commercial kitchen and food incubator spaces; (2) improve food security and public health in Cottage Grove; (3) increase the involvement of Cottage Grove's underrepresented/immigrant populations (e.g. youth, BIPOC representatives) in local food and place-making initiatives; and (4) build stronger supply chain connections for farmers and food producers with both local and regional markets.

Action plan ideas included making use of a kitchen in the Cottage Grove Armory, engaging

high school youth for food entrepreneurship, launching "shop local" marketing campaigns and creating a community garden at Bohemia Elementary School.

Success of the program may spell future greater financial opportunities for the city as well.

"We will have access to more grants ... because of this program," said Ferguson.

Next, three follow-up calls will be held with members of the local steering committee and workshop participants to

develop an action plan for the community's food system. The plan will ideally be complete by the end of 2020.

Calls dates and topics are scheduled as follows:

- Nov. 19, 9:30 a.m. — Community updates, action plan tables review
- Dec. 4, 10 a.m. — Updates, community action plan (full report)
- Dec. 16, 9 a.m. — Fi-

nal call, final review of the full report, review of the post-workshop guide, implementation discussion

"I look forward to seeing the plan completed over the next few months," Ferguson said.

For more information about the workshop or to get involved in local food system planning, contact City Planner Amanda Ferguson by email at plan-

ner@cottagegrove.org or by phone at 541-942-3340.

Participants in the two-day Local Foods, Local Places Workshop conversed via Zoom, with the next call date set for Nov. 19.



COURTESY PHOTO

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