



Food Marketing Task Force

Christine James-Brown, President & CEO, United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania
Walter Rubel, Director, Government/Community Relations, Acme Markets, Inc. — Co-Chairs

Draft Minutes Food Marketing Task Force Meeting February 6, 2004

Attendees:

Beau Bradley (Neighborhood Transformation Initiative), Jeffrey Brown (Browns Superstore), Larry Collins (ShopRite), Dwight Evans (State Representative), Kathy Fisher (Philadelphia Commission on Children and Families), Eva Gladstein (Philadelphia Empowerment Zone), Lori Glass (The Reinvestment Fund), Rob Graff (Pennsylvania Economy League), Jenny Hamilton (Philadelphia City Planning Commission), Christine James Brown (United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania), Richard Matwes (Wakefern), David McCorkle (Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association), Rich McMenamin (ShopRite), Carlos Peraza (LISC), Bilal Qayyum (Commerce Department), Walt Rubel (Albertsons/ACME), Randy St. John (Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association), Patrick Temple West (Archdiocese of Philadelphia), Jennifer Walker (Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association), and Herman Wooden (UFCW Local 1776). The Food Trust staff: Hannah Burton, Duane Perry, Yael Lehmann, and Frank Sherlock.

Presentations:

Dwight Evans State Representative Chairman Democratic Appropriations Committee

Representative Evans discussed his support for the work of the Food Marketing Task Force. He submitted a proposal to Governor Rendell to leverage a \$25 million investment into a \$98 million multi-faceted pool to stimulate supermarket investment in underserved communities. He strongly encouraged the Task Force to set up a meeting with Governor Rendell and Secretary Yablonsky to raise the profile of the initiative.

Rep. Evans shared several concerns about the supermarket initiative for the group's consideration. He emphasized the importance of high quality stores with a demonstrated commitment to the community. He also recommended identifying a process (such as a callback privilege) to hold businesses receiving public dollars accountable.

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**Blondell Reynolds Brown,
Philadelphia City Council**

Councilwoman Reynolds Brown gave a brief history of the involvement of City Council in the formation of the Food Marketing Task Force. She stressed the negative impact that poor food access has on developing stable communities. Councilwoman Reynolds Brown also presented Co-Chair Christine James Brown with a citation from City Council for her work with the Task Force and in the community.

**Duane Perry,
The Food Trust**

Duane Perry gave an overview of successful urban grocery stores, including Philadelphia's Cousins Market at 5th and Germantown, the Grey's Ferry Pathmark, and the new Acme at 19th and Oregon. He stressed the importance of good operators and public sector partnerships in developing profitable stores.

Approval of Recommendations to City Council

The members of the Food Marketing Task Force approved the recommendations for submission to City Council with the following additions and amendments.

1. The City should adopt food retail as a priority for comprehensive neighborhood development.

The first component of the proposal should be broadened to embrace a priority to food access in general, using more comprehensive language of groceries and access to fresh food retailers. Task Force members recommended adding an overarching statement addressing the importance of low-cost, nutritious, high quality food in neighborhoods that stresses different solutions for different neighborhoods. Since a supermarket for every neighborhood is not possible, other solutions to food access problems are also needed. Furthermore, any citywide vision for food retail should explicitly connect with neighborhood planning process.

2. The City should employ innovative, data-driven market assessment techniques to highlight untapped markets in underserved communities.

Task Force members approved Recommendation 2 without changes. Walt Rubel from Acme confirmed that using local data can change the sales projections that are generated by national data companies. Councilwoman Reynolds Brown added that good market data can help focus the city's resources.

3. The City should identify targeted market areas and promote them to real estate developers and the supermarket industry.

Task Force members approved Recommendation 3 without changes. The discussion emphasized the importance of approaching food retailing as a citywide issue, rather than on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis.

4. The City should give priority to assembling land for supermarket development.

Task Force members approved Recommendation 4 without changes.

Task Force members also want to explore the possibility of special negotiations with unions for supermarket projects. Rep. Evans suggested looking at the PHA or Convention Center where partnerships between labor and the public were key elements to the success of the projects. He stressed the importance of remaining loyal to companies who have staying power, and who have been loyal to the local consumer, by being a community presence throughout the years.

5. The City should reduce regulatory barriers to supermarket investment.

Task Force members approved Recommendation 5 without changes. They emphasized the importance of supporting the overall tax reform recommendations of the Tax Reform Commission.

6. The City should maximize impact of public incentives on supermarket site location decisions.

Task Force members recommended creating a citywide commercial plan that would identify strategies to expand and improve existing food retailers. Task Force members recommended considering if any operating subsidies that go to new stores could go to existing stores.

7. Pennsylvania and Philadelphia should offer low cost, long-term flexible financing to the supermarket industry.

Task Force members approved Recommendation 7 without changes.

8. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania should develop a business financing program to support local supermarket development projects.

Task Force members approved Recommendation 8 without changes.

9. The appropriate city, regional, and state transportation agencies should develop a safe, cheap, and convenient transportation service for shoppers who do not have access to a full service supermarket. A transportation needs assessment and the drafting of program guidelines should precede funding requests.

Task Force members recommended the adoption of this additional recommendation on transportation to improve access to full service grocery stores for low-income Philadelphians.

10. The City should create an advisory group of leaders from the supermarket industry, labor unions, the civic sector, and food policymakers to work with the City to implement the policy recommendations.

Task Force members suggested adding this recommendation.

Next Steps:

A draft of the final report will be circulated to Task Force members in March. It will be submitted in writing to Council in April.

Representatives of the Food Marketing Task Force will meet with Donna Cooper and Secretary Yablonsky on February 18th, 2004.

Duane Perry sent a letter to the new Director of the Commerce Department to apprise her of the work of the Food Marketing Task Force.