Many cities and towns throughout California and the United States are adopting policies that support sustainable food systems. The following recognition programs help cities and organizations support and learn from one another:

- Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move! Cities and Towns Campaign encourages officials to take action to reduce childhood obesity. Learn more at www.letsmove.gov.
- The Healthy Eating Active Living Cities Campaign by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy offers assistance, training, and publicity to California cities working on policies that improve their food and physical activity environments. Visit www.healthycitiescampaign.org.

The San Mateo County Food System Alliance (FSA) is a collaborative of farmers, fishermen, farmers’ market managers, environmental advocates, public health professionals, and residents seeking to support and promote a healthier and more vibrant local food economy. For more information, please visit http://aginnovations.org/alliances/sanmateo.

A sustainable food system ensures equal access to healthy, local food and is economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially just. In this type of food system, farmers, fishermen and chefs profit from the sale of their produce, fish, and value-added products; all residents can access and afford to buy local, healthy food, and our land is not just maintained, but preserved for future generations.

San Mateo County’s agricultural production in 2010 and local seafood harvest in 2009 had a combined worth of $147 million. The actual impact of food production on the local economy is estimated to be much higher—as much as $513 million—due to a multiplier effect. Our residents do not consume most of this food because it is purchased by food brokers and distributed outside of San Mateo County. Though this system works well for many farmers, it has decreased the variety of food grown in the county; reduced access to local, fresh and healthy foods, and distanced farmers from the local community.

A sustainable food system:

- Promotes the health of our residents by increasing access to healthy foods
- Benefits the environment by preserving agricultural land and working waterfronts
- Reduces our carbon footprint
- Enhances the economic vitality of our community by creating jobs
- Keeps money circulating within the community by boosting our local restaurant and tourism industries

California Senate Bill 375 and Assembly Bill 32, which mandate planning and land use to reduce carbon emissions, contribute to a sustainable food system.
Actions to Support a Sustainable Food System in Your Community

The San Mateo County Food System Alliance can help you build a sustainable food system. You can find resources at http://aginnovations.org/alliances/sanmateo, or contact the San Mateo County Health System’s Health Policy & Planning division at (650) 573-2398 or hpp@smcgov.org.

There are many ways your city or jurisdiction can join the movement:

Update Land Use & Other Local Policies

1. Support Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens
   - Establish urban agriculture as an approved land use in residential, multi-family, open space and other zones.
   - Encourage residents to donate surplus backyard produce to the food bank and other non-profit organizations.
   - Promote school gardens and garden-based education in our schools.

2. Protect Agricultural Land and Working Waterfronts
   - Encourage strategies that protect working landscapes and waterfronts, such as easements, reduced tax burdens, and increased access to land and infrastructure.

Purchase and Promote Locally Grown, Harvested & Produced Food

3. Bring the As Fresh As It Gets Campaign to Your Community
   - Encourage local businesses, including restaurants, grocery stores, catering businesses, and corner stores to use locally grown or harvested produce and seafood. For information on restaurants that sell local produce, visit www.freshasitgets.com.

4. Adopt Local Food Purchasing Policies
   - Require a percentage of food purchased to be grown locally.
   - Create incentives for contractors who prepare food made with local ingredients.

Local food purchasing policies create demand for local food. Guidelines can be added to current policies that address purchasing and describe nutritional guidelines for meals and snacks provided by an organization.

5. Participate in Community-Supported Agriculture and Fishing Programs
   - Connect local producers with residents by increasing participation in Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) or Community-Supported Fishery (CSF) programs.
   - CSA and CSF members pay a monthly fee for a regular box of produce or fish. This provides a reliable source of income for farmers or fishermen, keeps money in the community and decreases carbon emissions from transporting food long distances.

Support Healthy Mobile Food Vending

6. Offer incentives to run a healthy mobile food business such as discounts on permit fees, reserved spots at preferred locations, or low-interest loans to purchase equipment for healthy mobile food businesses.

In many communities, mobile food vending is an important part of the local economy and a convenient way for residents to purchase food. Healthy mobile food vending policies support small businesses and increase the amount of healthy food available in neighborhoods.