2010: LVEDC Sustainable Communities
Lehigh Valley Sustainability Consortium

Comprehensive plan lacked energy and climate change plans and a fresh food access plan.
2011:
Lehigh Valley Economic Development Commission administers grant; coalition partners develop plans and projects.

COMMUNITY INPUT:
30 public meetings
Over 8 months
600 + attendees
1100 + survey responses
1200 + governmental, non-profit, and business community partners
KEY FINDINGS:
1. Since 1930, the Lehigh Valley has lost 80% of its farms and 53% of its farmland.

2. Based on the average diet, Lehigh Valley farmers can only produce food for 24% of the Lehigh Valley population. The region is a net food Importer.
KEY FINDINGS

1. Eight Lehigh Valley areas have limited fresh food access. Residents in these “food deserts” lack convenient access to healthy, affordable food and sometimes have an over-abundance of fast food restaurants and convenience stores instead.

2. The region severely lacks “food infrastructure”, such as processors, aggregators, distributors, co-packers, food business incubators, etc. to support regionally grown foods.

3. LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY ASSESSMENT: Locally grown food contributes an estimated $17 million annually to the local economy. If every household spent $10 a week during the growing season (May-November) on locally grown food that number would increase to $97 million annually.
Key Findings
Comprehensive Plan Goals
Assessment Report
Public Support
Committed Stakeholders

NO FUNDING
More than half of the Lehigh Valley residents are above poverty and hungry.

75,000 people in the Lehigh Valley are hungry – 69,000 people.

75,000 Lehigh Valley RESIDENTS

49% Below Poverty
$23,000/yr. for a family of four

51% Families not eligible for food assistance

Figure 4: Population for Lehigh & Northampton Counties and the Lehigh Valley 1900-2040
United Way believes that every resident of the Lehigh Valley deserves access to Healthy, nutritious food.
Vision: All residents of the Lehigh Valley are able to eat healthy and nutritious local food for a strengthened local economy.

- **PRODUCTION**
  - LV has more farmers and farm business
  - Urban farming and community gardens increase.

- **DISTRIBUTION**
  - Local farms sell produce at affordable prices
  - Local distribution system maintains farm identity

- **CONSUMPTION**
  - Nutritious food is accessible
  - Consumers have knowledge of storing and preparing healthy foods
COLLECTIVE IMPACT

- Action
- Alignment
- Connections

- Common Agenda
- Shared Measurement
- Mutually Reinforcing Activities
- Continuous Communication
- Backbone Support

2015
The Lehigh Valley Food Policy Council seeks to promote an environmentally healthy food system by strengthening the local food economy, increasing access to fresh foods for everyone, reducing food insecurity, and supporting local farming in the Lehigh Valley.

Adding partners to Steering Committee and Working Groups

Semi-annual Full Council Community Meetings
Steering Committee

9 Working Groups
2 Years In….

- Data Collection
- Reporting
- Community Engagement
- Coordinated Projects
- Building Relationships
- Organizational Capacity Building
- Technical Assistance

- Strategic Planning
- Prioritized Areas
  - Food Access
  - Food Aggregation
  - Land Use
- Goal Attainment
- Funding Challenges

*Never before accessed food...new & stronger community efforts......regional relationships*