

# Strategic Planning Summary

*This document represents the collaboration of the MACSAC staff, Board, and community of supporters in guiding the growth and development of the organization. Summarized below are strategic goals that emerged from the process, and timelines for 1-year implementation of specific objectives.*

## Planning Process Overview

*The strategic planning process began in October 2008 and was completed in February 2009. A committee of MACSAC Board members and staff work closely with a trained facilitator to develop the process and organize the information. MACSAC endorsed farms participated in a planning session in December 2008, while community supporters responded to an online survey. The committee compiled and analyzed the information, and identified central issue areas. The next planning session in February 2009 was a community forum, where over 40 individuals gathered to investigate potential projects and foci within each issue area. This culminated in a day-long planning session for the MACSAC Board and staff. The group prioritized information gathered at the forum, and developed action plans for top issues. While these action plans represent this year's outcome for the strategic plan, the issues and priorities identified will remain a central guide in the creation of future action plans as well.*

*We thank the over 200 individuals who volunteered their time in the creation of this strategic plan.*

## Strategic Issues and 2009 Action Steps

### Strategic Issue #1: Farmer Education

- MACSAC farmers represent a wealth of knowledge that can be harvested to assist new growers
- A CSA toolkit is needed to educate new growers on the unique demands of CSA planning, production, management, and marketing
- Better and more efficient networking opportunities among growers are needed
- MACSAC's current farmer mentorship program is unsuccessful and needs to be revamped
- Annual Meeting of growers as an educational opportunity

#### Action Steps:

- Investigate CSA toolkit, create a process for collecting and compiling information and execute plan.
- Survey growers regarding collective purchasing and resource lists to share among growers
- Continue to organize one presentation per winter for MACSAC growers on the business aspects of CSA, ideally at the Annual Meeting.
- Revise farmer mentorship program into a small group format around topics of interest

## **Strategic Issue #2: Attract and Maintain High Caliber Growers as Endorsed Farmers**

- There is a very high demand for CSA in southern Wisconsin, and not enough farmers to meet it
- Diversification of farmer base
- Re-evaluation of endorsed farms to maintain quality

### **Action Steps:**

- Develop and document requirements, re-evaluation procedure, and process for handling complaints regarding endorsed farms
- Solicit new growers via farmers markets, conferences, etc and maintain list of potential farms for Fall mailing to solicit new grower members for 2010

## **Strategic Issue #3: Public Education**

- MACSAC's A to Z cookbook establishes the organization as a tremendous source of information and education for the consumer.
- MACSAC can build on this reputation by developing a new cookbook, with a focus on 30-minute recipes for busy eaters.
- MACSAC can play a larger role in a regional CSA conference
- Continue strategic tabling/outreach at venues that offer optimal exposure, such as the Garden Expo, Organic Conference, the Food for Thought Festival, etc.).
- Continue to host and improve "Bike the Barns" as a successful educational and fund-raising event

### **Action Plan:**

- Research and execute process for new 30-minute cookbook
- Connect with regional CSA conference organizers to investigate collaborative opportunities
- Evaluate current tabling commitments and affirm their value in the future

## **Strategic Issue #4: Marketing of CSA Farms**

- The CSA Open House is very successful, but overcrowding and timing challenge its future success and must be addressed
- The farm directory in print and online is a key marketing resources for MACSAC farmers
- MACSAC website should be improved and maintained as a primary promotional tool for MACSAC endorsed farms
- Need for a Communications Plan to send a strong consistent message and better target our outreach

### **Action Plan:**

- Continue to improve CSA Open House event by investigating new venues and formats

- Continue to maintain and improve farm directory and website
- Develop and execute Communications Plan

### **Strategic Issue #5: Accessing and Incentivizing CSA**

- MACSAC must continue and improve the Partner Shares Program to reach more income households with local food.
- MACSAC has been very successful in optimizing relationships with HMOs offering CSA incentives. These relationships are integral to the success of CSA in the Madison area and are a high priority.

#### **Action Plan:**

- Continue to work with Health Plan Partners to continue HMO rebate program
- Improve Partner Shares outreach & education to increase #'s of participating families