



FOOD INNOVATION DISTRICTS:

A Small Business Solution for Michigan

Elements:

What's in a Food Innovation District

The Food Innovation District Toolkit will include a matrix to help communities identify uses—either existing or planned—that may contribute to a food innovation district. These uses may include, but are not limited to:

Producer-Oriented Elements

- * Wholesale District
- * Resale/retail district
- * Planning & Coordination
- * Distribution Network
- * Shared Storage Facility
- * Processing Center
- * Marketing Services
- * Farm-to-School

Place-Oriented Elements

- * Restaurant
- * Entertainment/Agri-tourism
- * Existing Food Cluster
- * Residential uses

Community-Oriented Elements

- * Education Program
- * Community Supported Agriculture
- * Community Kitchen
- * Connection to Low-Income Individuals
- * Health Component

New Tool Shows How to Prepare Ground for Food and Farm Entrepreneurs

Local food is arguably one of the fastest growing segments of Michigan agriculture. Communities have a stake in the growth of this budding sector and its potential to grow jobs, investment, and quality of life.

A new toolkit is in the works to help local officials seize this opportunity by preparing fertile ground in cities and towns for food and farm entrepreneurs to develop their enterprises.

The toolkit explores the concept of a Food Innovation District. This approach to local food and farm business development is based on the economic benefits of business clusters, which arise as related enterprises locate in close proximity with one another and begin to share resources, information, and ideas.

The Food Innovation District Toolkit will demonstrate the key elements of Food Innovation Districts and provide a process for developing such districts locally, including planning and zoning approaches and economic development examples.

The full toolkit will be available later in 2012. In the meantime, the definitions and list of Food Innovation District elements included on this fact sheet can start your community's conversation about food innovation opportunities.

Food Innovation In Practice

Food Innovation Districts can range in size and scale, occurring in all types of communities, from rural to urban settings:

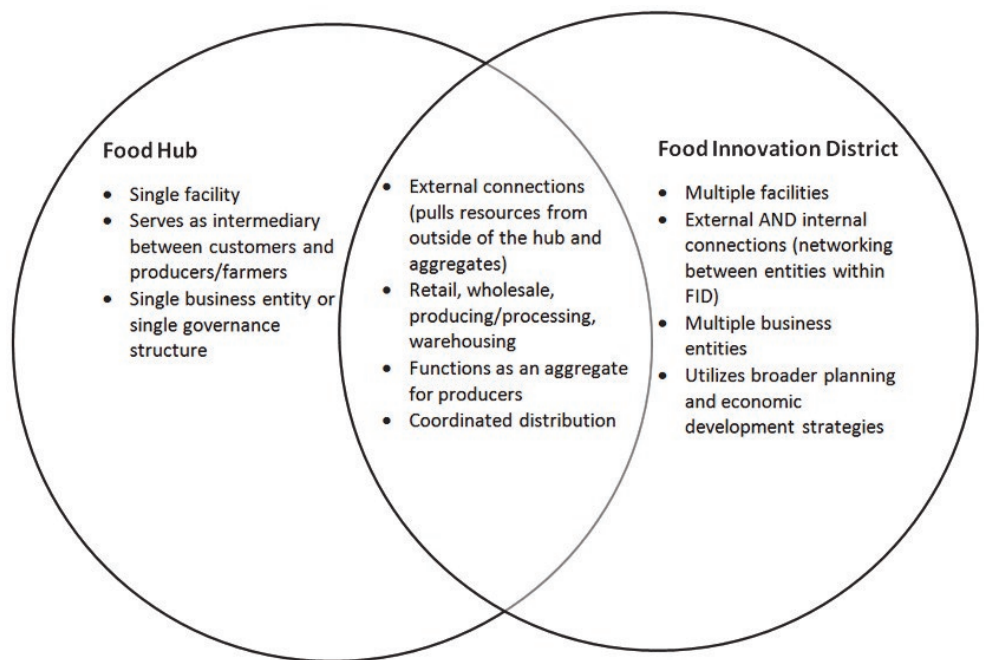
Detroit Eastern Market features a historic cluster of retail and wholesale produce markets along with 81 smaller scale distributors, food product makers, and restaurants. Soon the Detroit Eastern Market scene will include an urban agriculture enterprise and a food business incubator as well.

A Food Innovation District is now forming in Traverse City at the **Village at Grand Traverse Commons**, a redevelopment of a historic hospital campus. Around the Village's shops, offices, and lofts is a group of innovative local food-based businesses, as well as a farmers market, that make the place even more attractive to shoppers, residents, and investors. Local leaders are working to build smaller scale local food aggregation and processing facilities into this mix to help grow the cluster of businesses and meet needs of the region's burgeoning local food sector.

Food Innovation Districts and Food Hubs

Many Food Innovation Districts will include a regional food hub. Such hubs are in development across Michigan and the country to help local farms and food businesses bring their products to market more efficiently. Regional food hubs provide needed facilities and services for common food storage, aggregation, processing, and distribution needs.

Food Innovation Districts provide fertile ground, as places where like businesses cluster and work together, for food hubs to develop and grow.



Food Innovation Districts Toolkit Project

The Food Innovation District Toolkit is being produced in a partnership between the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments and the Michigan State University (MSU) Center for Regional Food Systems, with funding from USDA-Rural Development. For more information on the project, please visit www.nwm.org/planning-policy/food-systems-and-food-innovation-districts.