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## Background

**The Food Access and Aggregation Community Team** (the FAACT) is a coalition of food systems-based organizations operating in South King County, and supported by Public Health – Seattle; King County. The FAACT is engaged in the long-term planning of a community-led Farming and Food Aggregation Center. The ultimate goal of the Center is to increase the availability of locally grown produce for residents of South King County, and expand economic opportunity for small-scale growers in the region (many of whom are refugees and immigrants).



**Next Steps:** In order to advance the coalition's long-term goals, Core Group members hope to further define the FAACT's internal governance, communication, and accountability processes.

### Acknowledgements:

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South King County's agricultural sites are subject to annual flooding. Flood patterns must be taken into consideration when determining the location of a physical food aggregation center.

## Project Aims

Develop recommendations to inform the development of the FAACT's internal governance structure.

## Methods

- > Identify the FAACT's priorities, through informal interviews with Core Group members
- > Conduct a literature review, based on the Team's priorities
- > Interview individuals with food aggregation experience and/or coalition-leadership expertise to generate case studies
- > Develop a written report, describing key takeaways and recommendations to support the development of the FAACT's internal governance structure

### SOUTH KING COUNTY:

- > South King County is experiencing increasing demand for programs that support food access
- > Growing space for refugee, immigrant, and low-income communities is limited
- > Farmers have expressed a need for produce storage facilities, and access to market channels <sup>1</sup>

## Findings

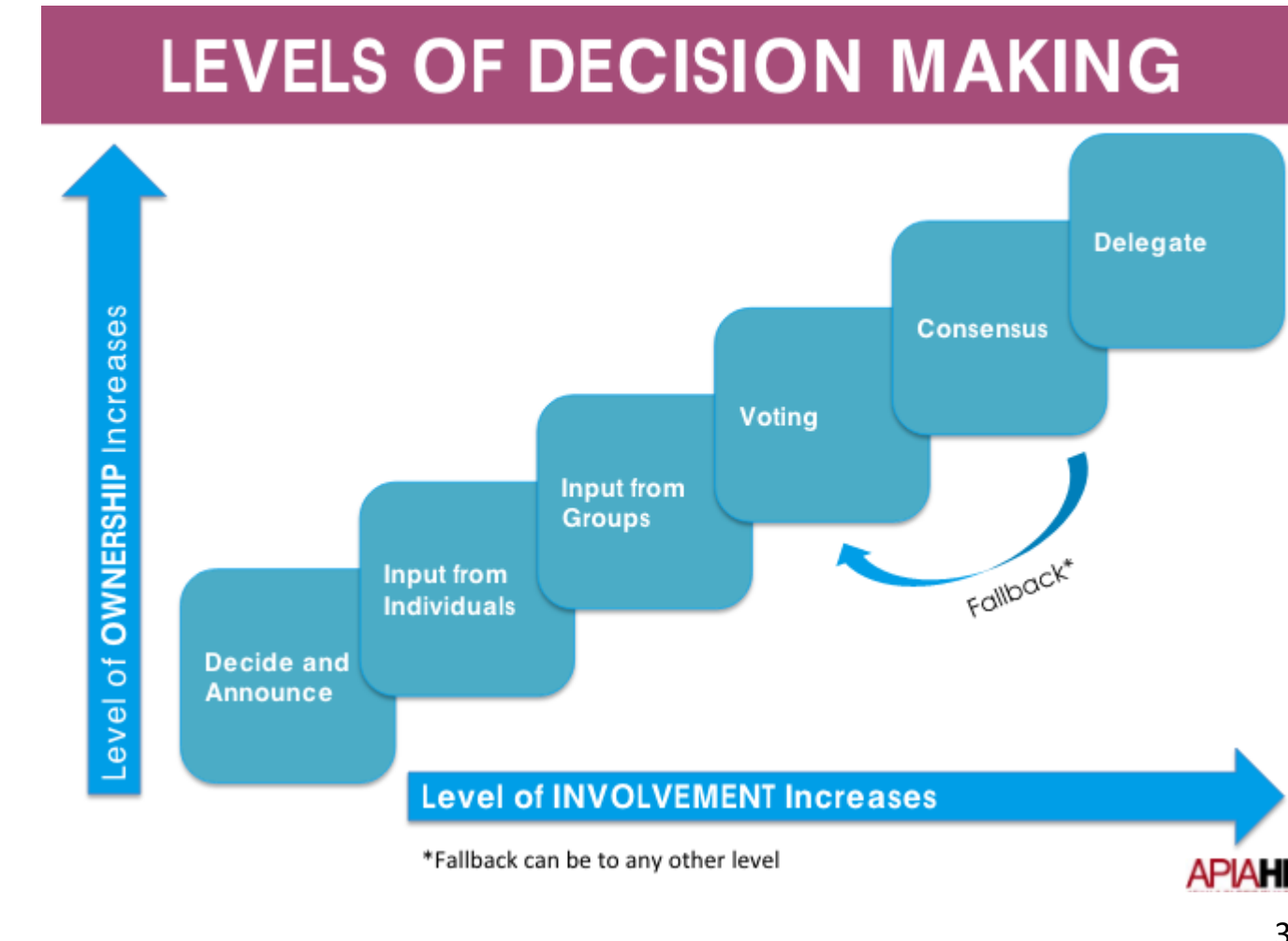
### Initial Interviews

The FAACT's Core Group members emphasized a desire to continuously implement a **collective leadership** model of governance, through:

- Employing **shared-decision making** strategies
- Clarifying coalition-member **roles**
- Prioritizing **community representation** and leadership

### Literature Review

"Collective leadership assumes that everyone can and should lead"<sup>2</sup>



"[Make] room for people to do what they care about rather than trying to get them to do what other people think is important."<sup>4</sup>

Explore low-barrier options for participation that do not detract from farmwork.<sup>5</sup>

## Case Studies

### South Sound Food System Network:

- **Voluntary coalition (unincorporated)**
- Highlights: the Network is developing a quarterly newsletter to engage with farming communities

### Cascade Harvest Coalition:

- **Non-profit organization**
- Highlights: the Coalition spent energy understanding the motivations, work-styles, and needs of staff, and consistently built funding for outreach into grants

### Fresh Start Farms (ORIS):

- **DBA of ORIS:** a collective brand for immigrant and refugee farmers participating in ORIS's New American Sustainable Agriculture Program (NASAP)
- Highlights: ORIS staff and board members are from new American communities; access to ORIS network and grant funding for farm coordinator position contributes to the organization's success

## Conclusions

- Adaptability and investment in relationship-building are key aspects of coalition success <sup>6</sup>
- Best practices in governance and accountability include: delegating decisions to those with direct experience, regularly sharing data, and communicating differences in culture and process <sup>3,6</sup>
- Community engagement and leadership is strengthened through funding community outreach and meeting participation <sup>4,5</sup>

### References:

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