AN OVERVIEW OF FOOD STRATEGIES FROM SELECT CANADIAN REGIONS: INFORMING THE GUELPH-WELLINGTON FOOD STRATEGY INITIATIVE

MARCH 2015

Katrin Sawatzky*, Thomas Armitage** and Erin Pratley***
*Research Shop Intern
**Research Shop Project Manager
***Research Shop Research Associate

The authors would like to acknowledge the contributions to this report of Ashley McInnes, Phil Mount, and Sarah Rotz of the Guelph Wellington Food Round Table’s Policy Working Group. The time they offered to frame the project and make additions and edits were invaluable. Additionally we would like to thank Lindsey Thompson of ICES for reviewing the work and offering edits and suggestions throughout the final editing process.
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Introduction** ................................................................................................................... 1  
**Theme 1: Strengthening Local Community Capacities to Increase Food Security** .......................................................... 3  
Guelph-Wellington Context ........................................................................................................ 4  
**Theme 2: Context-Specific Food Infrastructure** .......................................................................................... 8  
Guelph-Wellington Context ........................................................................................................ 9  
**Theme 3: Fostering Local Economic Development** ...................................................................................... 11  
Guelph-Wellington context ........................................................................................................ 12  
**Theme 4: Food’s Impacts on the Environment** .......................................................................................... 13  
Guelph-Wellington Context: ........................................................................................................ 14  
**Theme 5: Community Health** ........................................................................................................ 15  
Guelph-Wellington Context ........................................................................................................ 16  
**Theme 6: Preserving Rural Land and Communities** ...................................................................................... 16  
Guelph-Wellington Context ........................................................................................................ 17  
**Conclusion** ................................................................................................................... 19  
**Appendix A: List of rationales for a food strategy from other regions in Canada** ........................................................................ 1  
**EDMONTON** ................................................................................................................... 1  
Fresh: Edmonton’s Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy ............................................................................. 1  
**SARNIA-LAMBTON** ....................................................................................................... 3  
Creating a Food Revolution: A Healthy Community Food System Plan for Sarnia-Lambton...... 3  
**VANCOUVER** ................................................................................................................. 4  
Metro Vancouver Regional Food System Strategy ............................................................................. 4  
**TORONTO** ...................................................................................................................... 5  
Food Connections: Toward a Healthy and Sustainable Food System for Toronto .............................. 5  
**THUNDER BAY** ............................................................................................................. 6  
Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy ................................................................................................. 6  
**SASKATOON** .................................................................................................................. 7  
Saskatoon Regional Food System Assessment and Action Plan ......................................................... 7  
**WATERLOO REGION** ..................................................................................................... 8  
A Healthy Community Food System Plan for Waterloo Region .......................................................... 8  
**Appendix B: Annotated Bibliography of Food Strategy-Informing Documents** .............................. 1  
**TASTE REAL: BEST PRACTICES CASE STUDY (ANNOTATION)** .............................................. 2
An Overview of Food Strategies from Select Canadian Regions: Informing the Guelph-Wellington Food Strategy Initiative

List of Supporters ....................................................................................................................... 2
Stakeholder Committee .............................................................................................................. 2
Events ........................................................................................................................................ 2
Notes on the appendices ........................................................................................................... 3

INCREASING ACCESS TO LOCAL FOOD: POLICIES FROM OTHER PLACES AS A GUIDE TO INCREASING LOCAL FOOD ACCESS THROUGH LAND USE PLANNING IN ONTARIO (ANNOTATION) ........................................................... 4
Barriers to Local Food Access ................................................................................................... 4
Land Use Planning and Food Access in Ontario ........................................................................ 4
Planning for Food ....................................................................................................................... 5
Increase Healthy Food Availability in all Neighbourhoods .......................................................... 5
Extend Opportunities for Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture ....................................................... 5
A Note on Application in Ontario ................................................................................................ 6

ONTARIO: THE CASE FOR A PROVINCIAL FOOD POLICY COUNCIL (ANNOTATION) ........................................................................................................... 7
What is a food policy council? .................................................................................................... 7
State of food policy councils in North America ......................................................................... 7
Resources .................................................................................................................................. 8

MUNICIPAL FOOD POLICY ENTREPRENEURS (ANNOTATION) ........................................ 9
Findings from the survey ........................................................................................................... 10
Keys to success .......................................................................................................................... 11
INTRODUCTION

There has been a recent rise in food-related policy development at the municipal and regional levels. In Guelph, the Policy Working Group (PWG) of the Guelph Wellington Food Round Table (GWFRT) is in the midst of working towards developing a regional food strategy for Guelph-Wellington. “Municipal Food Policy Entrepreneurs”\(^1\) reviewed the actions and intentions of 64 organizations involved in food system policy change at the municipal level in Canada. This document described six categories under which this work is being done. Using these categorizations, the PWG would be considered a civil society organization with limited government funding and participation. This is further described as “a civil society organization, roundtable, or project committee, on which government officials may participate. The organization may receive some government grants.”\(^1\) The authors state that organizations in this category are often well recognized locally, and have had some success enacting projects such as food charters, which are often endorsed by their municipal governments\(^1\). These descriptions fit the GWFRT well, as they have governmental support through food charter endorsements and a staff member who sits at the table, with the rest of the membership consisting of civil society. The PWG seeks to expand on the accomplishments of the GWFRT by using the endorsed food charter as a springboard towards a more comprehensive discussion, prioritization, and ultimately action, on municipal food policies. To this end, the PWG has partnered with the Research Shop to further investigate and learn from regional food strategies that have been developed, or are in developmental stages, in Canada. The first document to emerge from this partnership was a list of rationales that each reviewed region had for implementing a food strategy (see Appendix A). Below we aim to build on the review of rationales by exploring the contexts and emergent themes identified in the chosen regions.

Charters, Food Strategies and/or organizations in the regions of Edmonton, Sarnia-Lambton, Vancouver, Toronto, Thunder Bay, Saskatoon, and Waterloo Region were explored to gain a holistic understanding of themes that emerged in each context. This document will discuss how each theme pertains to the Guelph-Wellington context. The regional scan revealed six key themes: (1) strengthening local community capacities to increase food security; (2) developing context-specific food infrastructure; (3) fostering local economic development; (4) reducing food’s negative environmental effects; (5) enhancing community health; and (6) preserving rural land and communities.

\(^1\) Municipal Food Policy Entrepreneurs: A preliminary analysis of how Canadian cities and regional districts are involved in food system change. http://capi-icpa.ca/pdfs/2013/Municipal_Food_Policy_Entrepreneurs_Final_Report.pdf
In each case, we list the associated communities from which the themes were identified, list and expand on any sub-themes that emerged, then detail how the theme manifests in the Guelph-Wellington context. We outline challenges in Guelph-Wellington, as well as the analysis and solutions suggested by local organizations and initiatives that are attempting to address these challenges. Where available and appropriate, resources and opportunities for collaboration have been listed.
THEME 1: STRENGTHENING LOCAL COMMUNITY CAPACITIES TO INCREASE FOOD SECURITY

1. As defined at The World Food Summit in 1996 by The World Heath Organization, ‘food security’ exists when, “all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”\(^2\). In addition, many food security networks and organizations worldwide have also identified access to culturally appropriate food as being an integral component of food security. The above definition frames the discussion of food security in this report. The importance of food security was a common theme that emerged in every region explored in this report. Sub-themes of food security and strengthening community capacities include:

2. Ensuring that citizens have access to safe, healthy, affordable, and culturally-appropriate food (this was a key theme in Sarnia-Lambton, Saskatoon, Waterloo Region and Vancouver).

3. Increasing food education and the food culture within a community. This education may come in the form of food skill-building opportunities (Toronto, Saskatoon and Waterloo Region), increasing food-related education in schools (Waterloo Region), or programming that enriches the community’s food culture (Saskatoon), which ultimately builds a community’s capacity to access culturally-appropriate food and gain higher levels of food security.

4. Increasing levels of community self-sufficiency; one example of this might be to increase support of urban agriculture initiatives (like in Thunder Bay), or in Saskatoon’s context, increasing community self sufficiency means improving the capacity to feed themselves through food skill-building opportunities.

5. Increasing community control over the food system (Sarnia-Lambton and Saskatoon)

6. Decreasing dependence on imported food (Waterloo Region and Saskatoon)

7. Planning Neighbourhoods that ensure the highest level of food access for all (Toronto)

---

\(^2\) http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en/
It is clear that many regions lack food education, resulting in communities with low levels of food self-sufficiency, separated from the origins of their food, and, with minimal interest and know-how about food in general (Saskatoon, Waterloo Region, Toronto). Additionally, it is evident in most regions that citizens lack control to make healthy food choices. Educational and skill-building opportunities increase both community self-sufficiency and individual levels of empowerment (Toronto, Waterloo Region, Saskatoon). Many regions also indicated high levels of dependence on imported, ‘convenience’ foods (Waterloo Region) as well as neighbourhoods that are not planned with walk-able or bike-able access to food (Toronto).

Guelph-Wellington Context

Ensuring that citizens have access to safe, healthy, affordable, and culturally-appropriate food

Existing challenges:

- In 2010, 12.1% of Guelph residents lived in poverty\(^3\)
- Out of 210 participants in a study of emergency food services, 95% of participants indicated monthly household income of $2,000 or less, which has resulted in the need to access emergency food services\(^4\)
- In Guelph-Wellington, 20% of the population’s mother tongue is not English, making it difficult to obtain employment or to access food\(^5\)
- 29% of food bank users in the Guelph area are a parent or guardian with a child between the ages of 0 to 146

Existing initiatives:

- The Garden Fresh Box is a program created in response to the lack of fresh food available to low-income families, and aims to increase access to local fresh produce\(^7\)

---


• Programs exist in the region to help families expand on food choices, such as community kitchens, community gardens, food pantries, The Guelph Food Bank, and church collective kitchens.

• The Seed Community Food Hub creates a space to bring people together through food to improve health, community, access and advocacy efforts in the Guelph region. The Seed recently received a Trillium Grant for $267,000.

Increasing food education and the food culture within a community

Existing challenges:

• With little to no food education in the Ontario K-8 curriculum, the gap between children and their food grows.

• A Statistics Canada Report on improving cooking and food preparation skills in Ontario found that "young adults report minimal involvement in food purchasing and preparation activities" which could be due to lack of a food culture in a community.

Existing initiatives:

• Local workshops and initiatives on food self-sufficiency and sustainability are offered in Guelph Wellington, some of which include: Minga Skill-Building Hub (offering workshops region-wide to foster the development of food skills); The Appleseed Collective Revival (a food gleaning, processing and distribution social enterprise), The Seed (community food hub), Seedy Saturday (a seed save and exchange initiative), and Ignatius Jesuit Centre (providing access to community garden plots and CSA).

• To increase food education in Guelph-Wellington, the Guelph Centre for Urban Organic Farming has created Garden2Table, a student run program to promote food education to children in the greater community.

10 http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/scientec18curriculum.pdf
12 http://restaurantsustainability.wordpress.com/2012/03/22/garden2table/
An Overview of Food Strategies from Select Canadian Regions: Informing the Guelph-Wellington Food Strategy Initiative

- The ‘Pathways to Education’ program offers support to children for school attendance, academic achievement, partnership with community agencies, and long-term support for high school students; it delivers a $24 return for every $1 invested (see footnote 9)

- The Food School at Centre-Wellington District High School offers a series of integrated courses in both cooking food (kitchen), and growing food — the latter at the Food School Farm

Increasing levels of individual self-sufficiency

Existing challenges:

- Rising food prices challenge food self-sufficiency: in order to meet the minimum nutrition recommendations, a family of four living in the Guelph region would need to spend $191.29 per week—a price which has risen by 14.5% from 2009 to 2012, and hence far outpacing inflation

Existing initiatives:

- There has been an investment in peer-based programs, such as the 'Community Development Neighbourhood Programs' that assist residents in gaining access to knowledge and skills

Increasing community control over the food system

Existing challenges:

- According to Lisa Ohberg, many barriers exist for consumers to access local food, including financial barriers (for local food available at specialty stores) and distribution barriers (for on-farm sales). Increasing consumer access to local food requires a structural shift of the current food system to better accommodate these needs

---

13 http://projectsoil.ca/project-overview/pilots/food-school-farm-pilot-site/
An Overview of Food Strategies from Select Canadian Regions: Informing the Guelph-Wellington Food Strategy Initiative

Existing initiatives:

- The Nourishing Communities Research Collective has developed the ‘Community Food Toolkit’, which supports communities in re-designing their own food system to build more “resilient, sustainable communities of food that respect the principles of ecological resilience, social justice and economic viability”\(^\text{16}\)

Decreasing dependence on imported food

Existing challenges:

- Ontario imports $4 billion more in food than it exports\(^\text{17}\) according to a Metcalf Foundation Report (2008) on local food in Southern Ontario
- Many public institutions face financial, regulatory and staffing constraints that challenge their ability to increase the volume of locally-produced food they offer, particularly in healthcare\(^\text{18}\)

Existing initiatives:

- The Guelph-Wellington region is unique and experiences a strong food culture due to our demand for local food and connections to local producers. The Guelph Organic Conference is one place where knowledge about food culture is fostered, as there are numerous speakers that we bring to the University to share ideas about food locality, food self-reliance, food collaborations, and decreasing dependence on imported foods
- Along with numerous CSA programs and Farmers’ Markets, there are also many regional institutions (e.g. U of G Food Service\(^\text{29}\)) attempting to increase the volume of locally-produced food, despite financial constraints

Planning neighbourhoods to ensure the highest level of food access for all

Existing challenges:

- From a report completed by graduate students for The West Willow Village Neighbourhood Group (2013), it was evident that Guelph’s transportation system is a significant barrier for individuals in the community. The location of bus stops,

---

\(^\text{16}\) http://nourishingontario.ca/community-food-toolkit/


increasing fare prices, and limited bus schedules have left many people unable to access the various programs and services available to them\(^{19}\).

- There are also significant social and infrastructural barriers to walkability and bike-ability in Guelph, both infrastructurally and socially (many neighbourhoods outside of the downtown core planned without walk-able or bike-able access to food and social amenities, which increases dependence on cars per each household)\(^{20}\).

**Existing initiatives:**

- The Guelph Food Charter advocates for access to food, and in a report completed by The Research Shop on assessing the alignment between The Charter and the Guelph Community Well-Being initiative, it was suggested to integrate food access policies into Guelph’s Transportation Master Plan to ensure that transit routes provided access to community gardens, food hubs, food banks, markets, and grocery stores\(^{21}\).

- In January of 2014, The City of Guelph initiated the ‘Affordable Bus Pass Program’ that encourages adults, youth, and seniors living low-income households to travel around Guelph using public transportation\(^{22}\).

**THEME 2: CONTEXT-SPECIFIC FOOD INFRASTRUCTURE**

A goal to improve food infrastructure was also a key theme emerging in all of the examined regions. It is important to note that many of these regions identified a need for food systems and infrastructure to be locally appropriate (Edmonton, Sarnia-Lambton, Saskatoon). Sub-themes of contextual food infrastructure include:

1. Ensuring that food systems support culturally-appropriate foods (Sarnia-Lambton, Toronto, Thunder Bay, Saskatoon, and Waterloo Region)

2. Food infrastructure promoting minimal food waste (Vancouver)

---


3. Food infrastructure supporting the production, distribution, and procurement of food in an efficient, effective, accessible, local and culturally-appropriate way (Sarnia-Lambton, Toronto, Thunder Bay, Saskatoon, and Waterloo Region).

All regions explored in this report, and most in North America, function within a food system focused on mass production and distribution of processed foods that does not necessarily fit the local context, culture, or needs of its people. In an increasingly diverse, urban, and densely populated country, developing a food system that is context-specific is important.

Guelph-Wellington Context

Ensuring that food systems support culturally-appropriate food

Existing challenges:

- In 2006, 16.1% of Guelph-Wellington residents were immigrants, with the number rising significantly each year, which makes the need for the provision of culturally appropriate food critical to the wellbeing of these citizens.
- Within Guelph’s Official Plan there is no prioritization of culturally appropriate food procurement strategies.

Existing Initiatives:

- Many community gardens have emerged in the Guelph-Wellington region; the gardens have been an effective place to create a natural hub where community members feel welcomed.
- Sustain Ontario and the Edible Education Network of Ontario, along with the Ontario government, are working on strategies on implementing an integrated approach to addressing procurement of healthy and culturally-appropriate food among children in Ontario schools.

---


Food infrastructure promoting minimal food waste

Existing challenges:

- “Food waste” is also relevant to the Guelph context - approximately 40% of all food produced in Canada is wasted.\(^\text{27}\)

Existing Initiatives:

- Kate Parizeau, a professor at The University of Guelph in the Geography department is leading an initiative called The Guelph For Waste Research Project.\(^\text{28}\)
- eMERGE Guelph is leading initiatives on educating the Guelph-Wellington community about food waste, including their ‘Efficient Home Visit’ program (see footnote 7)
- Appleseed Collective harvests and distributes fruit and vegetables — that would otherwise go to waste— from local property, orchard and farm owners.\(^\text{29}\)
- To fill the gap of the availability of ethno-cultural vegetables in Guelph, U of G is working on a program named Ethno-Cultural Vegetables Ontario (ECVO), a knowledge translation and transfer initiative attempting to create awareness about the benefits of locally-produced ethno-cultural vegetables and to help local farmers learn how to grow them.\(^\text{30}\)

Food infrastructure supporting the production, distribution, and procurement of food in an efficient, effective, accessible, local and culturally-appropriate way.

The Guelph-Wellington region has rich opportunity for food production, as it is surrounded by fertile soil. This, coupled with a rising demand by consumers for local food, has increased the number of niche markets for local foods, and has inspired collaborations between local producers and The University of Guelph.\(^\text{31}\)


\(^\text{28}\) http://guelphfoodwaste.wordpress.com

\(^\text{29}\) http://www.transitionguelph.org/project-list/appleseed-collective/

\(^\text{30}\) http://evcontario2011.blogspot.ca

\(^\text{31}\) http://atguelph.uoguelph.ca/2014/05/hospitality-services-puts-more-local-food-on-the-menu/
**Existing challenges:**

- Ongoing neoliberalization in the food industry (control of economic factors shifts from the public to the private sector\(^{32}\)) and oligopolization along the distribution and retail chain (an industry is dominated by a small number of sellers\(^{33}\)) is an existing challenge. With the increasing dominance of large grocery chains, it may be a challenge to ensure that diverse forms of fresh food access (small grocers, natural food stores, markets etc.) remain viable and affordable.

**Existing Opportunities/Initiatives:**

- The Guelph-Wellington region has rich opportunity for food production, as it is surrounded by fertile soil. This, coupled with a rising demand by consumers for local food, has increased the number of niche markets for local foods, and has inspired collaborations between local producers and The University of Guelph\(^{34}\).

- The Guelph Centre for Urban Organic Farming has also partnered with on-campus restaurant, PJ’s Kitchen, for the “Guelph Sustainable Restaurant Project” to ensure that food grown on the campus farm can be consumed by staff and students in campus eateries\(^{35}\).

**THEME 3: FOSTERING LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Many regions incorporated economic development as a key theme among their visions for a healthy food system (Thunder Bay, Saskatoon, Waterloo Region, and Sarnia-Lambton). Part of increasing the economic vitality of a community means fostering and supporting local and diverse economic developments. Sub-themes of economic development include:

1. **Local Food** (this theme was addressed in all regions but Edmonton)

2. **Building connections and fostering collaborations between sectors** (Sarnia-Lambton, Vancouver, Edmonton, and Saskatoon)

Sub-theme 1 in Vancouver was identified in response to the increased prices for imported foods, resulting in a renewed interest in buying local foods. In Toronto, the rationale reflects a desire to shift toward the consumption of local food to support rural

---

\(^{32}\) [http://web.inter.nl.net/users/Paul/Treanor/neoliberalism.html](http://web.inter.nl.net/users/Paul/Treanor/neoliberalism.html)


\(^{34}\) [http://atguelph.uoguelph.ca/2014/05/hospitality-services-puts-more-local-food-on-the-menu/](http://atguelph.uoguelph.ca/2014/05/hospitality-services-puts-more-local-food-on-the-menu/)

\(^{35}\) [http://restaurantsustainability.wordpress.com/about/](http://restaurantsustainability.wordpress.com/about/)
industries, as historically was once the case for this region. Many regions saw a need to increase the resiliency, diversity, and connectedness of a community, reflected in the emergence of sub-theme two.

Guelph-Wellington context

Local Food

Existing challenges:

- As this region holds prime agricultural land, “Wellington County agriculture plays a key role in our local economy, with a diverse farming community that includes 2,588 farms spanning 196,621 hectares of land”\(^{36}\). Guelph-Wellington currently experiences a rich local food economy, with potential to develop it even further\(^ {37}\).

Existing Initiatives:

- Taste Real, a Guelph-Wellington local food marketing initiative attempts to connect consumers to local farm products\(^ {38}\)
- Backyard Bounty (Guelph’s urban farming social enterprise)\(^ {39}\)
- Wellington County has produced the Local Food Map, making it accessible and increasing awareness for consumers on how to locate local producers and be able to buy directly
- The Guelph-Wellington region has an abundance of opportunities to purchase local food from farms, farmers’ markets, restaurants, caterers, retailers and distributors, which are outlined in Taste Real's Local Food Map

Building connections and fostering collaboration between sectors

Existing Challenges:

- There is no policy or plan that actively prioritizes/strategizes collaboration across sectors

---


\(^{38}\) http://www.guelphwellingtonlocalfood.ca/

\(^{39}\) http://www.backyardbounty.ca
Existing Initiatives:

- The Canadian Government recognizes the importance of collaboration, and Canada’s Economic Action Plan 2013 provides $200 million over 5 years to Ontario in the area of manufacturing. This fund will foster collaboration between the private sector, research institutions, and post-secondary institutions.\(^40\)

- Taste Real (a local food initiative developed to support local businesses, farms, and producers who are passionate about local food\(^41\)) and Local Food Fest (a festival organized by Taste Real and sponsored by local businesses that includes a farmer’s market, prepared foods, workshops, activities, and live music)

- The Guelph-Wellington Food Roundtable was established in 2009 as a network of community members and organizations from Guelph and Wellington County who support the development of a sustainable food system in which everyone has access to nutritious, healthy food that is produced and distributed in ways that enable local communities, food producers and natural living systems to flourish.

- The GWFRT Policy Working Group seeks to develop policies that actively prioritize/strategize collaboration across sectors

THEME 4: FOOD’S IMPACTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

This theme was important to all regions, and emerged in various ways depending on the context. Sub-themes include:

1. Maintaining healthy ecosystems (important for all regions)
2. Developing low-carbon food systems (important for all regions)

Many regions identified these components as being key to their Food Charters or Food Strategies due to the mass production of food on an industrial scale and the negative environmental impacts associated with production. All regions stressed the importance of protecting our environment while producing enough food for all.

\(^{40}\) http://fednor.gc.ca/eic/site/fednor-fednor.nsf/eng/fn04110.html

\(^{41}\) http://www.guelphwellingtonlocalfood.ca
Guelph-Wellington Context:

Maintaining healthy ecosystems

Existing Challenges:

- The food structure in which Guelph-Wellington produces and grows food that is largely conventional, high-input, and carbon intensive.

- Food production’s impact on the environment, as well as maintaining healthy ecosystems is a mandate in the Guelph-Wellington Strategic Mandate Agreement. In 2011, The Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship provided a report entitled “Integrating a Sustainable Food Systems Framework into Guelph’s Official Plan”.

- Conservation areas exist locally such as Guelph Lake, Rockwood Conservation area, and The Arboretum at the University of Guelph.

- There are challenges to change concerning how farmers are presently growing their crops. There is discord between how food is currently grown, and more sustainable practices envisioned by some parties. Food production is largely conventional, largely high-input, and carbon intensive.

Existing Initiatives:

- The Resilience Fest & Sustainability Week
- The Old-Growth Forest Project at Ignatius Jesuit Center
- The Growing-Forward Program through OMAFRA, supporting agriculturally sustainable best-practices

Developing low-carbon food systems

Existing challenges:

- As described above, Guelph-Wellington, like many other regions in Canada is dependent on the industrialized food system for its food supply. Transitioning from this system is the key challenge here

---

42 http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/publications/vision/GuelphAgreement.pdf
Described below are a number of positive initiatives with a marginal impact in terms of production.

Guelph residents have been voting with their food dollars, and in the last 10 years, we have seen a stark increase in the number of restaurants that offer local/vegetarian/vegan/fair trade options. Guelph Wellington local food services, pubs, and cafes increased by 2.4% in between June 2009 and June 2010.

**Existing Initiatives:**

- The ReCycle Bike Reuse Program and Goods Exchange Weekend through The City
- Project Neutral
- Social enterprises like Bike It Guelph or Spaces 2 Grow
- VegFest, a Guelph festival that celebrates and educates the community on consuming a plant-based diet
- There has been a movement to transition Guelph into a Fair Trade City, but it is unclear whether this initiative is on-going.

**THEME 5: COMMUNITY HEALTH**

Community health can be identified and measured in many different ways; from individual eating behaviours, to the amount of nutrition information available and accessible, or even the presence of food-related health problems such as hunger, obesity, and chronic diseases. Every region explored in this report acknowledged the importance of community health as being an integral component of their food strategies or food charters. This concern has resulted from rising prevalence of diet-related illnesses due to increasing consumption of unhealthy and processed foods high in fats, sugar, and salt. While food is central to health, a holistic approach is important since “50% of health outcomes are attributable to socioeconomic factors, another 10% to

---

44 [http://emergeguelph.ca/about/food/](http://emergeguelph.ca/about/food/)

45 [http://www.vegfestguelph.ca/speakers.html](http://www.vegfestguelph.ca/speakers.html)

46 [https://fairtradeguelph.wordpress.com/](https://fairtradeguelph.wordpress.com/)

physical environment factors, 15% to biological factors, and 25% to the health care system.  

**Guelph-Wellington Context**

*Existing challenges:*

- The Guelph-Wellington region has also seen increased levels of childhood obesity and other food-related illnesses; it has become evident that it is important to provide safe and nutritious food to all of our citizens in this region.

- Almost half (47%) of children in new immigrant families in Ontario are poor.

- Guelph experiences the most impoverished community in the Wellington region, with an average income after tax of $43,984, while the average Ontario home is $63,441.

*Existing Initiatives:*

- The Guelph & Wellington Poverty Task Force is working on many initiatives, including the development of policies to enable sustainable livelihoods and optimal health/living conditions for all people. Initiatives include 'Circles', 'Getting Ahead', and 'Bridges out of Poverty'.

**THEME 6: PRESERVING RURAL LAND AND COMMUNITIES**

The importance of preserving rural land and communities is a theme that was evident in Waterloo Region, Edmonton, Sarnia-Lambton, Toronto, and Vancouver. The sub-themes of this issue include:

1. Disappearing Farmland (relevant for the Toronto, Waterloo Region and Vancouver contexts)

2. Land Use (Edmonton, Waterloo Region and Vancouver)

3. Sustaining Rural Communities (Sarnia-Lambton and Waterloo Region)

Some regions identified the issue of preserving rural land and communities due to the disappearance of farmland and, for some regions, a resulting decline in capacity to

---


produce local food. For example, given rapid population growth resulting in urban sprawl, Edmonton has committed to balancing divergent needs, pressures, and values with land use and preservation.

**Guelph-Wellington Context**

**Disappearing Farmland**

**Existing challenges:**
- From 1976 to 2011, 1.1 million hectares of farmland has essentially disappeared in Ontario, according to Statistics Canada data.
- Although specific numbers may not exist, farmland has been converted to housing developments as Guelph expands its borders.\(^{50}\)
- According to Ontario Farmland Trust, the entire province lost 243,000 hectares of farmland between 1996 and 2006, which included a staggering 18 per cent of Ontario's Class 1 farmland, the best of the best land.\(^{51}\)

**Existing Initiatives:**
- Regarding the issue of disappearing farmland, The Ontario Farmland Trust is working on farmland preservation initiatives that are innovative, collaborative and strong, such as the Land Securement Program that works with farmers to help keep their land for conservation uses in the long-term.\(^{52}\)
- FarmStart, a local Guelph organization nurtures and encourages a new generation of ecological farmers through offering programming, support, and financing.\(^{53}\)

---


\(^{52}\) [http://ontariofarmlandtrust.ca/programs/land-securement/](http://ontariofarmlandtrust.ca/programs/land-securement/)

\(^{53}\) [http://www.farmstart.ca](http://www.farmstart.ca)
Land Use

Existing challenges:

• Over 50% of southern Ontario, below the Canadian Shield, is prime agricultural land\(^{54}\). Preservation of this land is critical to establishing a sustainable local food system in Guelph-Wellington. Guelph is also a rapidly growing region, with population forecasts predicting an increase to 175,000 people\(^{53}\). Within the GTA, provincial projections of population growth indicate that this region will grow by 4 million people in the next 30 years\(^{55}\).

• The current population of Guelph and Wellington County is approximately 115,000 and 80,000 respectively\(^{16}\).

• According to the Guelph Official Plan, The City plans on increasing population and building density in the downtown core, with further developments occurring on the periphery of the city\(^{53}\).

Existing Initiatives:

• For land use planning, the City of Guelph Official Plan indicates that much of the city’s growth will happen through intensification of the downtown core, with slight industrial development on the city’s periphery, along with the preservation of significant natural areas\(^{56}\).

• Additionally for planning, in 2013, students from the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at U of G, along with professor Karen Landman, conducted a community-based research project for food system policy development in The City of Guelph. Bringing together best practices from literature, case study examples, and engagement with citizens through a focus group session, the process resulted in a submission of policy recommendations for City staff, with hopes to be integrated into Guelph Official’ Plan\(^{57}\). This study also found that City influence ends at city borders, demonstrating the importance of working with the county to protect farmland.

---

\(^{54}\) [http://www.neptis.org/publications/agriculture-central-zone/chapters/where-are-significant-agricultural-lands-located](http://www.neptis.org/publications/agriculture-central-zone/chapters/where-are-significant-agricultural-lands-located)


Sustaining Rural Communities

Existing challenges:

- Agriculture is the key to success in sustaining rural communities; an estimated 9% of the rural Ontario labour force is employed in agriculture and its related fields\(^\text{58}\).

- The Ontario Federation of Agriculture states that investing in rural community infrastructure (transportation, health care, child care, small business) will have a synergistic effect on the community, sustaining it over the long-term (see footnote 20).

Existing Initiatives/Opportunities:

- Health Canada has developed a guide for public participation in the area of community engagement, so that rural communities in the region can become involved in change processes, thereby increasing community vibrancy\(^\text{59}\).

- The Trillium Foundation offers many grants to support and sustain life in small/rural communities, including grants for Arts & Culture, Human & Social Services, and Sports & Recreation.

CONCLUSION

This report presents a comprehensive approach to understanding how Guelph-Wellington faces many of the same food security-related challenges as various regions across Canada. Using food charters and food strategies in Edmonton, Sarnia-Lambton, Vancouver, Toronto, Thunder Bay, Saskatoon, and Waterloo Region to demonstrate challenges facing food systems across Canada, this report explores initiatives in the Guelph-Wellington Context. It is evident that Guelph-Wellington has initiatives, programs, organizations and strategies already working toward the preservation of the environment and rural land, food security, community health, and economic development. Examination and comparison of other regions’ approaches could inform and strengthen the approach of the Policy Working Group, and therefore, it is recommended that future research be conducted for the development of a Food Strategy for the Guelph-Wellington context.

\(^\text{58}\) http://www.ofa.on.ca/issues/submission/OFA-Response-to-Growing-Strong-Rural-Communities-Ontario’s-Rural-Plan

\(^\text{59}\) www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/canada/regions/atlantic/pdf/pub_policy_partic_e.pdf
APPENDIX A: LIST OF RATIONALES FOR A FOOD STRATEGY FROM OTHER REGIONS IN CANADA


*Research Shop Intern  
**Research Shop Project Manager  
***Research Shop Research Associate

EDMONTON

**Fresh: Edmonton’s Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy**


**Year efforts were initiated:** 2011; **Status:** Approved by City Council in November 2012

**Lead Organization:** The Food and Urban Agriculture Advisory Committee – a group of 14 citizens, some of whom are farmers, developers, academics, community organizers, and consultants.

**Participating Stakeholders:** Angus Watt Advisory Group, Sustainable Food Edmonton, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Food Processing Development Centre, Greater Edmonton Alliance, Kuhlmann’s Market Gardens, Alberta Netherlands Trade Office, Walton Development and Management, Toma and Bouma Management Consultants, Live Local and Blue Pear Restaurant, Edmonton Foundation of Community Leagues, Hore Hill Community League, Faculty of Extension - University of Alberta, Growing Food Security in Alberta

**Rationale:** “We are a rapidly growing city in a growing region. As we welcome more people, there is increased demand and pressure, in terms of services, jobs, land, infrastructure and other resources. Our strategic planning must make sense within our local, regional and provincial contexts and our approaches to how we grow and use land must balance different and divergent needs, values and pressures.”

**The five goals of the strategy are:**

1. A stronger, more vibrant local economy
2. Less energy, emissions and waste
3. A healthier, more food secure community
APPENDIX A: LIST OF RATIONALES FOR A FOOD STRATEGY FROM OTHER REGIONS IN CANADA

4. More vibrant, attractive and unique places

5. Healthier ecosystems

Do they have a food charter? No, they state: “The Advisory Committee discussions recognized that although food charters can be useful, and have been in other jurisdictions, the strong foundation provided by the Vision and Goals of this Strategy may serve the same purpose as that of a food charter. At the same time, the Advisory Committee also acknowledged that the development of an Edmonton Food Charter could be undertaken in future if the community and stakeholders felt it necessary”
SARNIA-LAMBTON

Creating a Food Revolution: A Healthy Community Food System Plan for Sarnia-Lambton


Year efforts were initiated: 2010; Status: Ongoing development, call for new members in July 2013. Facebook page has not been updated since 2011.

Lead Organization: Sarnia-Lambton Food Coalition – a group of 9 citizens, some of whom are farmers, community members, city employees, legal council, consultants, and religious affiliates.

Participating Stakeholders: Community Members, Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board, City of Sarnia Planning and Building Department, Lambton Federation of Agriculture, Egg Farmer, Community Legal Assistance Sarnia, Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, Community Member, Inn of the Good Shepherd

Rationale: The Sarnia-Lambton Food Coalition (SLFC) felt that to best address local food issues, better connections between different sectors of the local food system were needed.

The SLFC envisions a healthy food system that boosts the nutritional, environmental, economic, and social health of Sarnia-Lambton. The SLFC recognized that the first step toward achieving a healthy food system was championing the development of a food system plan. This plan identifies a list of actions that can be used to improve the health of our food system.

Goal: To give Sarnia-Lambton residents control over a food system where everyone has access to and can afford safe, nutritious, culturally-acceptable food that is produced in an environmentally sustainable way and sustain our rural communities.

Do they have a food charter? Yes, with 45 signatures online. Located here: http://www.sarnialambtonfoodcharter.com/sarnia-lambton-food-charter.php - Prominent signatories include The Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Sarnia Lambton Local Immigration Partnership.
APPENDIX A: LIST OF RATIONALES FOR A FOOD STRATEGY FROM OTHER REGIONS IN CANADA

VANCOUVER

Metro Vancouver Regional Food System Strategy

http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/development/AgricultureAndFood/Documents/RegionalFoodSystemStrategy.pdf

Year efforts were initiated: 2008 informally: “In 2008, Metro Vancouver’s Board adopted a Sustainability Framework outlining its vision, mission, values, sustainability imperatives, and sustainability principles. The Sustainability Framework provides the foundation for Metro Vancouver’s suite of plans, including the Regional Food System Strategy.”

Status: Implementation Phase; Given the collaborative nature of the regional food system, the Strategy is best viewed as a working document that will be periodically reviewed by participating agencies, organizations and the public to consider whether priorities should be refined and new goals or strategies be established. This periodic review should be at least every five years.

Lead Organization: Metro Vancouver is a political body and corporate entity operating under provincial legislation as a ‘regional district’ and ‘greater boards’ that delivers regional services, planning and political leadership on behalf of 24 local authorities. The 2014 Board consists of 40 Directors representing 21 Municipalities, one Electoral Area, one treaty First Nation, and one Municipality that is a member of the GVRD for the parks function. In short, the board is made up of Mayors, Councilors, and Chiefs.

Rationale: “Food is a top of mind issue for many people. There are growing concerns about the rising incidence of obesity, food safety, disappearing farmland, depleted fish populations, food waste, and the carbon footprint of food. At the same time there is a renewed interest in growing food, preparing healthy meals, buying local foods, and working with others to provide equitable access to nutritious food in our communities.

This regional interest in food issues is taking place at the same time research indicates that the global food system is likely to face significant changes. Food prices are rising reflecting a growing demand for food and constraints on food production, both in agriculture and fisheries. Within this context, we have an opportunity to expand the local food supply within Metro Vancouver if all levels of government, their agencies, food producers and others in the food sector, non-governmental organizations, community groups and individuals can agree to a common vision and a plan to realize it.”

Do they have a food charter? No.
TORONTO

Food Connections: Toward a Healthy and Sustainable Food System for Toronto


Year efforts were initiated: The TFPC was established in 1991 as a subcommittee of the Board of Health to advise the City of Toronto on food policy issues.

Lead Organization: Toronto Board of Health Food Strategy Steering Committee

Stakeholders: Toronto Food Policy Council (subcommittee of the Health Board). Also, various agencies now work on the initiatives being developed by way of the food strategy that are described below. These organizations are FoodShare, Toronto Employment and Social Services. These initiatives also receive donations (in-kind and financial) from the TTC and United Way.

Status: Working on a number of initiatives: The Healthy Corner Store; Mobile Good Food Market, Community Food Works, Locally Grown World Crops, and Food Access Mapping

Rationale: "Over the years, we have moved away from eating locally grown or produced foods and towards a food system that focuses on the mass production, distribution and marketing of processed "convenience" foods. This has contributed to the food-related problems facing Toronto and other big cities - hunger, obesity, chronic diseases, disappearing farmland and environmental pollution. In 2008, the Board of Health approved the Toronto Food Strategy to guide the City towards a vision for a new food system that focuses on health."

Goals: To create a food system that is focused on health. There are three pillars to this vision: (1) a focus on the health of people by supporting healthy and culturally appropriate food, nutrition and disease prevention, protection of the environment, and development of food skills; (2) Food pricing that favours healthy choices by supporting healthy and culturally appropriate food that is affordable for everyone in the city; and (3) neighbourhoods that are planned with food access in mind, by supporting efforts to make healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food that is easy to access in all neighbourhoods in the city.

Does Toronto have a food charter? Yes, created in May 2000: http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/presentations/Toronto_Food_Charter.pdf
THUNDER BAY

Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy


Year efforts were initiated: Food Charter endorsed in 2007; In 2011, The City of Thunder Bay’s 2011-2014 Strategic Plan identified the development of a comprehensive local food strategy as an action item. Trillium Grant received in 2013 to develop the food strategy.

Lead Organization: The Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy Steering Committee

Stakeholders: Thunder Bay Federation of Agriculture, Food Action Network, Thunder Bay District Health Unit, EcoSuperior

Status: The finalized Food Strategy was presented to councils in the Thunder Bay area. Formal endorsements were received from the City of Thunder Bay (June 16), the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge (June 23), O'Connor Township (June 23), the Township of Gillies (August 11), the Municipality of Shuniah (August 11), and the Municipality of Neebing (September 3).

Rationale: Over the years, awareness about the importance of food has grown among the general public, government, and business. A growing local food scene and strong community support means the time is ripe to take a more coordinated approach to addressing food issues and to designing solutions that protect and nourish the environment, foster local and diverse economic development, build community, improve access to food, and much more.

Pillars: Food Access, Forest and Fresh Water Foods, Food Infrastructure, Food Procurement, Food Production, School Food Environments, and Urban Agriculture.

Does Thunder Bay have a food charter? Yes, endorsed by the Mayor of Thunder Bay in 2008.

SASKATOON

Saskatoon Regional Food System Assessment and Action Plan

http://www.chep.org/files/106/Saskatoon%20Regional%20Food%20Assessment%20Report%20December%202013%20(1).pdf

Year efforts were initiated: Food Charter endorsed in principle by City Council in 2002; Assessment and Action Plan created December 2013.

Lead Organization: Saskatoon Regional Food System Assessment and Action Plan Team

Stakeholders: CHEP Good Food Inc., the City of Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Health Region, and the University of Saskatchewan. The group also includes individuals from the farm and food retail/wholesale sectors.

Status: The Team is committed itself to initiate a Saskatoon Community Food Council and will continue to promote the food strategy, inviting participation from other individuals and organizations to foster the vision and strategy.

Rationale: “How can we design our food system - from production to consumption – to ensure that over the long term, all residents will eat nutritious food and that we are able to produce more of that food ourselves? Our strategy aims for more food self-reliance. We want to retain and indeed improve our capacity to feed ourselves, through skills and infrastructure. Over the long term, this capacity will ensure food availability. Our strategy includes a cultural component because in the end, our goals are public choices, and will depend on our community wanting a vibrant food culture, where no one goes hungry.”

Goals: (1) Enrich Saskatoon’s food culture, (2) Ensure everyone has nutritious food, (3) Boost the hybrid food economy*, (4) Minimize food’s ecological impact


*Hybrid Food Economy: “Food exports are vital to Saskatchewan’s economy and food imports provide us with a rich and varied diet. However, locally produced food is critical to our long-term self-sufficiency and our community. We support the concept of a hybrid economy, which includes import and export, but seeks a larger role for local.”
WATERLOO REGION

A Healthy Community Food System Plan for Waterloo Region

Year efforts were initiated: 2005; Food Charter complete in 2013.

Lead Organization: Waterloo Region Public Health

Stakeholders: Waterloo Region Public Health is guided by an advisory group that involves: producers, retailers, consultants, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs, the Waterloo Federation of Agriculture, Waterloo Region Food Systems Round Table and others to guide the development of this Community Food System Plan.

Status: Ongoing, strategic directions were made clear (see goals below), but who the actors are today and whether the work is coordinated is unclear. A number of organizations are listed as working on particular projects, but the document is dated (2005).

Goals: the goal of a healthy community food system be that all residents have access to, and can afford to buy safe, nutritious, and culturally-acceptable food that has been produced in an environmentally sustainable way and that sustains our rural communities. The group looks to specifically: strengthen food-related knowledge and skills among consumers; work with the planning department to address agricultural policies; increase the availability of healthy food; strengthen the local food economy.

Rationale: “A community food system planning approach goes beyond looking at individual eating behaviours and providing nutrition education. It examines the broader environment in which food is produced and made available to people and attempts to enhance it in order to improve health. A food system that improves access to fresh produce and other healthy food throughout our region, decreases our dependence on long-distance food transport, and helps to support a viable local agricultural economy, is key to the health of all residents and our community as a whole.”

Does Waterloo Region have a food charter? Yes. Endorsed by the City of Waterloo and the Region of Waterloo, as well as many community organizations and private citizens. http://www.wrfoodsystem.ca/files/www/Waterloo_Rregion_Food_Charter_final_Apr8.pdf
APPENDIX B: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FOOD STRATEGY-INFORMING DOCUMENTS

Carly Fraser*, Thomas Armitage**, Erin Pratley***

*Research Shop Intern  
**Research Shop Project Manager  
***Research Shop Research Associate

Four documents were reviewed and annotated by Carly Fraser with support from Thomas Armitage and Erin Pratley. These annotations were written with the intent of identifying and highlighting information that could directly influence or inspire the PWG’s work on a regional food strategy. The documents reviewed are:

1. Best Practices Case Study (Taste Real - 2010)


3. Ontario: The Case for a Provincial Food Policy Council (Mark Winne – Sustain Ontario – 2013)

4. Municipal Food Policy Entrepreneurs: A preliminary analysis of how Canadian cities and regional districts are involved in food system change (Rod MacRae, Kendal Donahue – Toronto Food Policy Council, Metro Vancouver Food Policy Council – 2013).
TASTE REAL: BEST PRACTICES CASE STUDY (ANNOTATION)

Taste Real is a stakeholder-led branding initiative in support of local food tourism in the Guelph-Wellington region. It was created with the intention of improving the economic viability of local food partners including farmers, retailers, restaurants, caterers, and farmers’ markets. The branding initiative is also in response to the multitude of different brandings around “local” that existed in the Guelph-Wellington region. This document discusses the steps that have been taken in developing the brand so far.

List of Supporters

The project was funded through a 12 month funding grant by the Ontario Market Investment Fund (OMIF) and was supported by the City of Guelph, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Guelph Chapter of the Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association, The Guelph Wellington Local Food Initiative, the Elora-Fergus Agri-Culinary Tourism Project, and the Guelph Downtown Business Association.

Stakeholder Committee

A Stakeholder Advisory Committee was developed and incorporates 44 stakeholders. The purpose of developing the stakeholder committee was to ensure stakeholder led direction of the brand. Stakeholders were included in the identification of marketing and promotional gaps and asked to define a successful outcome for regional local food and tourism. Boosting sales, educating the public, mapping relationships, and increasing farmer business income were all expressed. The vision for the stakeholder group is to develop a governance structure for this newly established Guelph Wellington Local Food Organization. The stakeholder committee was involved in the development of the business plan and marketing concept for Taste Real. At the time of this report, future planning was still taking place. The advisory committee was led by Bob Desautels, owner of local food restaurant chain Borealis and Kate Normet, owner of Rivers Edge Goat Dairy. Other members of the advisory committee have been included in the appendix.

Events

Three events were promoted and/or developed through the project: 1) The Outdoor Farm Show, 2) the Royal Winter Fair, 3) the Farmer-Chef “Source it Here” event. These events were identified as valuable networking and sales opportunities.
Notes on the appendices

Appendix 3 is valuable for regional food asset categories as outlined by Taste Real. We recommend reviewing Appendix 5 in particular as it contains a list of stakeholders that could be added to the PWG’s list of potential supporters.
INCREASING ACCESS TO LOCAL FOOD: POLICIES FROM OTHER PLACES AS A GUIDE TO INCREASING LOCAL FOOD ACCESS THROUGH LAND USE PLANNING IN ONTARIO (ANNOTATION)

In this document the authors assert that land use planning in Ontario must change to incorporate planning for food. Planning for food builds a holistic and ‘complete’ community in that it must take into account the health, economy and environment of a place/community. More specifically, increased accessibility and availability of local foods are emphasized as outcomes of land use planning that considers and plans for people’s relationships with food. Examples are provided of specific food planning initiatives across North America.

**Barriers to Local Food Access**

Two major barriers to local food access are considered. Financial limitations of Ontarians, specifically those living with low incomes, hinder the ability to purchase local foods especially if sold at a premium. The other barrier mentioned is the lack of availability of local food. There is increasing demand for local foods yet lack of retail availability, especially in communities with predominantly low income earners. There is a brief discussion of the change in consumer expectation and loss of food knowledge due to rise of supermarkets as the dominant point of food retail; even when consumers want to know more about their food and its origins it is difficult to find this information. Inequitable access to healthy food, and therefore health, as a result of these barriers is the primary risk discussed.

**Land Use Planning and Food Access in Ontario**

Current planning limits urban and peri-urban agriculture, dis-incentivizes local and small scale farming and retail, and does not plan for agriculture. One of the issues is the overlap in jurisdictional responsibility for food in Canada. In Ontario the Planning Act provides guidance to municipal governments about how to plan in accordance with provincial standards. The Act recognizes local authority in planning but also requires that municipal planning be consistent with provincial plans. To generate substantial momentum at the municipal scale it is important to have food related goals included in a municipality’s ‘official plan’.

Urban form has a large effect on the way that people access their food. Current zoning separates sites of food production from retail and consumption that in turn changes the relationships society has with its food. Currently food access in Ontario is largely dependent upon large supermarket retail outlets located outside of residential and agricultural spaces. The uniformity and sheer quantity these large retailers want, their
buying power, and the expectation of abundance they foster in consumers further pushes out smaller producers and retailers and decrease their economic viability. However consumers are increasingly demanding more healthy and local foods. Land use planning can help to resolve this problem of supply and demand through the promotion of mixed-used zoning.

**Planning for Food**

Mixed-use development is proposed as a best practice for planning comprehensive communities. Mixed-use development creates space for small retailers, agriculture and markets, and theoretically is income diverse and walkable. Transportation routes, types of transportation and travel times are also important to consider planning for equitable food access. Wisconsin is given as an example of a city that plans for food by promoting mixed-use zoning, and walkable and complete communities. Food is considered in the sustainability goals of this city.

**Increase Healthy Food Availability in all Neighbourhoods**

When planning does not occur with local food in mind, barriers inevitably emerge. Planning for food should be done in the same way that air quality, water, and shelter are all accounted for in formal municipal plans. Ann Arbor, Milwaukee ensures that planning incorporates food by having urban agriculture advocates involved in the development of the city’s comprehensive plan. There was also the establishment of a Farmers Market Commission to make improvements when their dominant market lost popularity in the 70’s and 80’s. Land use planning needs to explicitly remove barriers and incentivize development of small retail stands, stores or markets. Baltimore actively turns vacant properties into food retail opportunities. San Francisco specifically tries to attract affordable food retailers into neighbourhoods with low incomes. Furthermore it is suggested to promote healthy food through the restriction of unhealthy food. An example of this is the restriction of fast food retailers in specific regions.

**Extend Opportunities for Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture**

Zoning laws are what allow agriculture to occur in a variety of spaces, not just rural areas. Zoning laws may affect production of food in a variety of ways. The sale of food may be limited to certain areas zoned as commercial, which can be limiting to market stands or sales from local garden stands for example. Barriers may also be encountered through restrictions on building new infrastructure, which could extend to greenhouses and hoop houses. Keeping animals for food or food production is also dependent on zoning and planning laws. Support from government to create and protect urban agriculture land is therefore necessary. Agriculture needs to be recognized as an
appropriate land use in planning and zoning so that it can be supported as economically viable.

Creation of agricultural land can be promoted and supported by local governments through land trusts and community garden programs. These programs should provide support and coordination. They also more formally institutionalize food planning into municipal government. NeighborSpace is a notable Chicago land trust organization. Montreal has a Municipal Community Gardening Program which has acted as a model for cities such as Winnipeg, Regina, and Halifax. P-Patch Community Gardening Program is located in Seattle and puts a specific attention on low-income and immigrant communities, and youth in its programming. Seattle mandates a minimum of one community garden per 2,500 households and supports the gardens through municipal funding. Toronto’s zoning laws require green rooftops on new building on certain sizes.

A Note on Application in Ontario

Local food assessments by the provincial government are recommended to assess regional barriers to local food access. Some cities support urban agriculture informally, but this document seeks more formal recognition to ensure permanency and support. Support for local food means recognition of the importance of food for health, community, environment, and the economy. In sum, governments need to plan for food, and plan for it well.
ONTARIO: THE CASE FOR A PROVINCIAL FOOD POLICY COUNCIL (ANNOTATION)

What is a food policy council?

A food policy council is an "intentional approach to promoting a food system that is sustainable, just, and robust" (p. 3). Food is discussed in various governmental departments such as agriculture, health and education, but there is not one department which brings together all of these in Ontario. A food policy council should bring together the diversity of actors and knowledge bodies involved in the food sector so that informed food policies can be made. This also allows for connections to be made between actors which further strengthens the food sector.

Council members of the established food councils have been elected or appointed through various means. It is important that the council membership reflects the actors in the food system with government officials from departments such as education, natural resources, and economic development.

State of food policy councils in North America

There has been significant growth of food policy councils in North America since 2010. In 2012 the Community Food Security Coalition reported that there were 13 food policy councils in Canada compared to 180 in the US (see p.4 for data and comparisons between 2010 and 2012). The Municipal/Regional Food Systems and Strategies project has reported 59 food policy councils. Twenty-nine of these councils are local, twenty-nine are regional, and one is provincial (Nova Scotia). The majority of councils are formed independently of local government. Better results were seen in the food system when councils engaged with government. Emphasis is put on collaboration between public and private sectors: "The quality of work of food policy councils is often a reflection of the quality of the collaboration between its members" (p. 5).

I recommend reading pages 6 and 7 for examples of successful initiatives led by food policy councils in collaboration with other governmental departments. Briefly, these initiatives include: food hubs; preserving farmland; improving food central public transportation; creating farm-to-school initiatives; improving food affordability; and promoting food and agricultural education in the curriculum. Edmonton, Alberta is touted as being a city food policy council to observe as it has captured citizen attention and was predicted to have significant influence in getting city council to pay attention to food issues.
Resources

A resource mentioned here that may be of further use is the 2012 survey of food policy councils by John Hopkins School of Public Health. It found that food policy councils are often well positioned to look at issues such as the accessibility of food and nutrition, land preservation, urban agriculture, and promoting local food.

These additional resources are provided on p.8:

- www.foodpolicycouncil.net
- www.markwinne.com (“Resources”)
- Doing Food Policy Councils Right: A Guide to Development and Action and a toolkit of local food policies in the U.S. prepared by the Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic called Good Food, Good Law.
MUNICIPAL FOOD POLICY ENTREPRENEURS (ANNOTATION)

This report is a summary of finding from a cross-Canada survey on 64 municipalities working to improve their food system. There are six predominant forms of municipal food policy activities described based on level of municipal support. Additionally, challenges and keys to success are summarized and three key recommendations are provided. The report emphasizes the importance of food systems thinking and food systems change to promote health, social cohesion, economic development and environmental security through municipal food policy initiatives.

Six forms of municipal food policy activity

1. **Municipality-driven food policy initiatives**: These are initiatives are financed by and housed within municipal government. They have been created by municipal governments but may have been influenced by multi-stakeholder groups. Funding and structural support is provided as part of the municipal structure.

2. **Hybrid model with direct links to government**: These initiatives are created through civil society and government collaboration. The municipality generally supports financing and structure, and helps establish and maintain political linkages. Some issues included fluctuating municipal support therefore resource and time constraints. This is indicated as the preferred structure because it incorporates the resources and expertise of both civil society and government actors. Examples include Toronto, Vancouver, and Markham.

3. **Hybrid model with indirect links to government**: Less formal ties to government are created which requires a mixture of funding resources. Impact tends to be more project specific and therefore less focused on food system approaches. Motivations still included social development and health.

4. **Food policy organization linked to government through a secondary agency**: No formal government connection but informal ties may exist through grants or endorsement of food charters. Restraints are noted on staff and funding. Again more goal oriented projects rather than food systems thinking.

5. **Civil society organization with limited government funding and participation**: These organizations are more informal with limited funding and staff but still maintain local visibility. Due to limited operational capacity they are necessarily goal oriented.

6. **Civil society organizations with no direct government involvement**: No connection to government and generally unacknowledged by municipal governments. Their actions and the information available about them is limited.
The majority of initiatives are currently operating between category 3 and category 6. Category 1 and 2 are seen as the most desirable structure for long term success. See page 13 for a table of categories, characteristics, number of initiatives and examples of each.

Findings from the survey

- What were the municipal policy drivers?
- There was recognition of interconnectedness between social problems and food.
- Public health is the most common and strongest supporter. It is very important to have government linkages going forward.
- Tie together policy strategies with municipal, regional or provincial strategies.

How do funding and budgets affect food initiatives?

- Government funding provides security and can catalyze income generation from elsewhere.
- Limited or insecure funding puts a focus on project based initiatives, which can distract from systems change thinking.

What is the role of champions?

- Champions are people that can help to navigate the political and institutional structures. They are key political actors such as council members that can connect across the political spectrum gaining support in other regions and with other councilors.

What structural arrangements do food policy initiatives have?

- Wide variety of structural arrangements but connections to government provides security and longevity.
- Sometimes municipalities seek support from civil society organizations when they do not have the resources or the expertise.

What is critical about the nature of the membership?

- Currently, membership is substantially from non-traditional food systems actors.
- “…[A]lternative” companies are over-represented relative to their significance within food chains” (p. 19).
The Research Shop

APPENDIX B: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FOOD STRATEGY-INFORMING DOCUMENTS

- Underrepresentation from the food waste management and processing sectors.

- More informal groups rely heavily on the facilitation skills of their members, therefore membership significantly affects the success of initiatives.

- Membership diversity is needed to help foster alliances between unusual parties and people of different backgrounds and knowledge.

To whom do staff report?

- Most commonly Public Health or social development units.

- Internal (individual) support, not just structural support, is important to foster success.

- “A lack of staff support was probably the most cited impediment to effectiveness for initiatives in Categories 3 to 6” (p. 20).

- It can be difficult to navigate between the expertise and structure of civil society and government expertise although no suggestions were made of how to make this process easier.

How important are strategies, action plans, and charters?

- They create opportunities for discussion on food topics.

- Actions plans, charters and strategies are sometimes the motivation behind organizing.

- They present food systems approaches which address policy and programming.

Keys to success

Despite lack of jurisdictional authority, municipalities are the most directly involved due to their closeness to their community and its needs. BC saw a significant increase in food policy initiatives with the provincial recognition of “community food security” as a priority for public health. Ontario has seen more growth in initiatives through networking between municipalities. More coordination within the province is needed to ensure commitment.

The following are common keys to success found in the survey.

1. Bring together people who don’t normally spend time together.

2. Conduct a food system assessment or develop a food charter based on an informal
3. Spend time getting to know the local food system, but have a first success to build credibility.

4. Understand the needs and priorities of host agencies and help the host themselves in the food policy work.

5. Gradually strengthen structural connections to municipal government. Move away from reliance on volunteers but also retain some autonomy as to not be too attached to political whims.

6. Link food to existing reports and policies on related themes.

7. Maintain perceptions of legitimacy, feasibility, and support with all political parties and the general public.

8. Once initiatives have some local success, move on to addressing provincial and federal issues with impacts on local food scene.

Three broad recommendations

1. Create a network to share information across Canada between municipal food policy initiatives and actors.

2. Document and evaluate the work of initiatives to better demonstrate successes and identify social change.

3. Clarify jurisdictional food policy connections and define linkages between policy makers at different scale of government.

Additional Information

- Identified questions for consideration and areas for further research are provided on pages 28 and 29.

- Appendix 1: Commonly used measurements for evaluating local food systems

- Appendix 2: Municipal food system advisory group