



Whole Food Systems: Information Sheet

A part of the Local Food Security Handbook

Table of Contents

1. [Whole Food Systems Initiatives](#)
 - a. [Establish and enforce reasonable farm residential footprint bylaws](#)
 - b. [Develop a Food Strategy/Action Plan](#)
 - c. [Sign the Cool Food Pledge](#)
 - d. [Join the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact](#)
 - e. [Take the Global Food Justice Pledge](#)
 - f. [Include agriculture in economic development programming](#)
 - g. [Integrate Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security into Official Community Plans \(OCPs\)](#)
 - h. [Collaborate with External Environmental Organizations / Agencies / Community Groups](#)
 - i. [Include Food Security in Climate Adaptation Strategies](#)
2. [Resources](#)



Whole Food Systems Information Sheet
A Part of [The Local Food Security Handbook](#)

Whole Food Systems Initiatives

Climate Caucus has ranked the following initiatives from beginner to expert, based on Complexity to implement, Staff time & expertise, and Political capital. Please note, these rankings are our own best judgements.

-  Green Square = Beginner
-  Blue Square = Intermediate
-  Black Diamond = Advanced
-  Double Black Diamond = Expert

Publish a community food assessment and directory including emergency access.

The Basics:

- Community food assessments are necessary to understand the gaps in the current food system
- Local governments can publish food directories or other guides to local food to help their community source and access local food options
- Local governments can also form partnerships with other community groups working on food issues rather than take on the task themselves

Examples:

- Centralkootenayfood.ca: *This Directory is your guide to locating food grown, raised and processed in our region. Whether you are an area resident who wishes to eat close to home, a processor who wants to source more local ingredients, a restaurateur who wishes to feature the bounty of the Central Kootenay on your menu, a tourist who wants to sample local fare, or a farmer who wants to know what the market opportunities are, this Directory is for you.*
- [Vancouver Island BC, Guide to Local Farmers](#)
- [Comox Valley Growers Guide](#), BC

Buy Local/Canadian Initiatives

The Basics:

- Fund (or otherwise resource) initiatives to encourage buying local
- Develop a local food procurement policy
 - Such policies should be included in all food procurement calls
- Municipalities could also hire, or designate a current staff member, as a Local Food Coordinator that is responsible for promoting local food campaigns and events.

Examples:

- [Island Good](#) initiative by the Vancouver Island Economic Alliance
- [BuyBC](#)
- [City of Toronto, Local Food Procurement Policy](#), ON
- [City of Mississauga, Making Better Choices: A Sustainable Purchasing Approach](#), ON
- [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit - Local Food Procurement Policy](#), ON

Resources:

- [Sustain Ontario Local Sustainable Food Procurement for Municipalities and the Broader Public Sector](#)

Establish and enforce reasonable farm residential footprint bylaws

The Basics:

- In some communities, massive houses are being built that take up valuable farmland and increase the cost of the land prohibitively so that it is no longer usable for agricultural purposes.
- Consider reducing the current allowable residential footprint on farmland.

Examples:

- [Richmond](#), BC

- [Kelowna, Bulletin: Farm Residential Footprint](#), BC
- [District of Summerland](#), BC,
 - [Zoning Bylaw Review](#)

Establish a food charter that addresses the right to food

The Basics:

- One way to get a community on board with taking action on food is to go through the process of creating a food charter.
- These are visionary statements that can then be implemented to address food problems in your community such as a lack of local food production, poor diets, a lack of access to healthy food etc.
- Rather than a policy document, a charter is a guide for decision making, laying out a vision and principles for a local food system
- Food charters also act as an educational and awareness raising tool
- Food Charters can provide legitimacy and advocacy capacity to a food policy council
- Food charters are usually developed by various food related actors: : various local governments, community health centre, food partners alliance, County of Simcoe, local university, farmers associations, etc.

Examples:

Case Study – [City of Vancouver, BC](#)

Vancouver was the second City, after Toronto, to develop a Food Charter in 2007. In Vancouver, the Charter was developed by a municipally affiliated citizen group, the Vancouver Food Policy Council, with extensive experience organizing at the community level.

The Charter was also used by the Food Policy Council as a tool for community engagement and consultation for over a year before it was presented to Vancouver City Council for approval. In this way, the inclusive, consultation-based process of formulating the Food Charter was just as important as the final product, the Food Charter itself.

- [City of Vancouver](#), BC Food Charter
- [City of Halifax](#), NS, Food Charter
- [Squamish](#), BC, Food Charter (smaller community)
- [Thunder Bay](#), ON, Food Charter
- [City of Hamilton](#), ON, Food Charter
- [Simcoe County](#), ON Food and Agriculture Charter

- [York Region](#), ON, Food Charter
- [Kamloops](#), BC Food Action Plan
- [Richmond](#), BC Food Charter

Resources:

- [Food Charters in Canadian Cities: A key milestone for building food strategies, food policies and food plans](#)
- [Community Food Centres - Good Food Principles](#)

Develop a Food Strategy/Action Plan

The Basics:

- If a food charter is the vision statement, a food strategy is the action plan
 - offering a coordinated set of recommendations that require collective action and collaboration between governments, communities, institutions, organizations, and businesses.
 - Identifying the actions and resources needed to affect positive food systems change and proposes tools to measure progress.
- Similar to the food charter, this document is developed by various stakeholders representing farmers, institutions, government, food security organizations etc.
- Acts as a practical tool to engage community and partners, and build connections between actors in the food system.

Examples:

- [Thunder Bay](#), ON Food Strategy
- [Vancouver](#), BC Food Strategy 2013
 - [Food Strategy Update report and Action Plan](#) 2016
- [Penticton](#), BC Food Security Strategy
- [Calgary](#), AB Food Action Plan
- [Toronto](#), ON Food Strategy
 - [Presentation Slides](#)

Case Study - [Halifax](#), NS, JustFOOD Action Plan

On March 7th, 2023, Halifax Regional Council endorsed Part A of the JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region (HRM). Part A sets the stage for HRM's regional food system, captures public engagement findings and establishes 56 recommendations for positive food system change. The principles of the plan follow the [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact](#), of which Halifax is a signatory.

Part A of the JustFOOD Action Plan reflects years of collaborative community and partner engagement, gathered through workshops, surveys, focus groups, and meetings. Engagements were designed to ensure that community concerns and aspirations were consistently understood, considered, and directly reflected in Plan recommendations, recognizing that true expertise is found in community.

On February 6th, 2024, Council endorsed Part B of the Plan which is the practical document that includes implementation strategies outlining key milestones, roles of key leads and partners, outcomes and performance measures, and resourcing and budget requirements.

Resources:

- [National Food Strategy- Canadian Federation of Agriculture](#)

Sign the Cool Food Pledge

The Basics:

- [Cool food Pledge](#) members commit to a target of reducing the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the food they serve by 25 percent by 2030 relative to a 2015 baseline - a level of ambition in line with achieving the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.
- Pledge members report food purchase amounts by weight each year with data on all animal-based foods, as well as plant protein. Coolfood calculates the climate impact of food and provides an annual report showing GHG emissions by food type, trends year-over-year, and comparison.

Examples:

- [The City of Toronto](#) - Signed the Cool Food Pledge in 2021



◆ Join the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

The Basics:

- The [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact](#) is a global joint cities pact with 280 signatories all over the world, launched in 2015.
- The pact includes a Set of 27 recommended actions clustered in 6 categories, as well as 44 indicators to support cities in monitoring their progress.
- The pact supports Knowledge sharing among cities through webinars, field visits, advocacy etc.
- There are annual Milan pact awards where cities are recognized for their efforts.

Examples:

- Guelph, Halifax, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver are all signatories
- See all signatories [HERE](#)

■ Take the Global Food Justice Pledge

The Basics:

- Birmingham City Council launched the Global Food Justice Pledge (GFJP) in 2021
- The pledge emphasises the need for cross-cutting policies to create and support an affordable, nutritious, and sustainable food system for all citizens, irrespective of social or economic resources.

Examples:

- [Food Cities 2022 Learning Platform](#)

Resources:

- [The Pledge](#) - If you are a city that wishes to join us in signing the pledge, email FoodSystemPH@birmingham.gov.uk with the email title 'City Pledge Commitment'.
- [Global Food Justice Pledge Resources](#)

- [Global Food Justice Pledge Self-Assessment Tool](#)

Include agriculture in economic development programming

The Basics:

- When doing local economic development programming, include agriculture and food processing

Examples:

- [North Saanich Agricultural Economic Development Strategy](#), BC
- South Island Prosperity Partnership in [Victoria secured funding to research the need/establishment of an abattoir](#), BC

Integrate Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security into Official Community Plans (OCPs)

The Basics:

- This helps encourage sustainable land-use plans and associated funding needs.
- Integrate and identify sustainable agriculture and local food production as best uses for land use.
- Expand actions that enhance the resiliency of the local food system.

Examples:

- [Kamloop's Official Community Plan: Land Use Policies](#), BC
- [North Vancouver's Food Security and Urban Agriculture Section in its Official Plan](#), BC
- [Kingston's Integration of Urban Agriculture Policies in its Official Plan](#), ON
- [North Saanich's Agriculture Section of its Official Plan](#), BC

Case Study Vancouver, [False Creek North Official Development plan.](#), BC

This ODP is distinct because City of Vancouver planners recognized the need for

residents to have access to food shopping within walking distance of their homes. The ODP identified the inclusion of a 2300-square-metre grocery store as a planned retail use for the area. This was an innovative move, as official development or community plans generally allow market forces to determine how retail space will be used, with mixed results.

Collaborate with External Environmental Organizations / Agencies / Community Groups

The Basics:

- External food-related organizations/ climate hubs/ civil society organizations, etc., can contribute research, funding, and energy into food security efforts, thereby enhancing local decision-making capabilities and engagement.
 - Collaborative governance approaches also help to engage and include marginalized communities in decision-making processes.

Examples:

- [Kootenay Local Agricultural Society](#)
- [Table Matters](#)

◆ Include Food Security in Climate Adaptation Strategies

The Basics:

- Adaptation strategies work to identify main vulnerabilities and local governments' roles in addressing them.
- Food security will be negatively impacted by climate change, as a result of unpredictable weather patterns, drought, extreme heat and cold, as well as climate disasters. Local governments need to prepare for this impact.

Examples:

- [Castlegar's Adaptation Plan](#)
- [Kaslo's Adaptation Project](#)

Case Study: Durham Region, [Growing Resilience: Agriculture Sector Climate Adaptation Strategy \(2019\)](#), ON

Durham Region is a leading agricultural producer, with the largest Gross Domestic Product from agriculture of the Greater Toronto Area municipalities. Climate modelling shows that Durham will experience greater extremes in both precipitation and temperatures. To address these impacts, the Durham Region Agricultural Sector Climate Adaptation Strategy was developed by an Agricultural Sector Expert Task Force between March 2018 and March 2019. Over 150 stakeholders, including Durham's area municipalities, the Provincial Government, academia, the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee (DAAC), and the agricultural community were engaged through two broad stakeholder consultation processes.

The Strategy identifies anticipated risks to the local agricultural sector, resulting from a warmer, wetter and wilder climate with increased frequency of extreme weather events. These include risks to certain varieties of crops and yields; heat-related and other health risks for livestock and farm workers; flooding and stormwater management; invasive species/pests; damage to public infrastructure, farm buildings and structures; concerns around electrical outages/ capacity and emergency alerting and response systems.

The Durham Region Agricultural Sector Climate Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan is intended to provide the members of the agricultural community with programs and tools to help them to engage in and take advantage of climate change opportunities and successfully navigate extreme weather conditions. This strategy includes an action plan—based on a preliminary assessment of resource requirements—that outlines short term, priority activities. These recommended actions were developed collaboratively by the Region, lead agencies, and potential partners.

Resources

- [National Food Strategy- Canadian Federation of Agriculture](#)
- [Food Charters in Canadian Cities: A key milestone for building food strategies, food policies and food plans](#)
- [Community Food Centres - Good Food Principles](#)
- [Sustain Ontario Local Sustainable Food Procurement for Municipalities and the Broader Public Sector](#)