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Item No. 15.1.7
Halifax Regional Council
March 7th, 2023

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 1, 2023

SUBJECT: **Part A of JustFOOD: Action Plan for the Halifax Region**

ORIGIN

December 3, 2019, Regional Council motion (Item No. 15.3.2):

MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

THAT Regional Council:

1. Affirm HRM's membership on the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA) Steering Committee and endorse the HFPA terms of reference, as contained in Attachment A of the staff report dated October 21, 2019;
2. Endorse in principle the Halifax Food Charter, as set out in Attachment B of the staff report dated October 21, 2019, as the guiding direction for preparing a Halifax Food Action Plan;
3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer, or designate, to negotiate and execute, on terms acceptable to the Chief Administrative Officer, a contribution agreement with the HFPA (or designated member organization), to provide a financial contribution of up to \$60,000, plus in-kind support, to be used towards the development of a Halifax Food Action Plan, contingent upon the HFPA (or designated member organization) obtaining sufficient commitments from other sources to fund and support the project;
4. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to consider community food security as part of the 2019/2020 Council Priority Outcome: Healthy, Liveable Communities deliverable to develop a community well-being index; and
5. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to include funds in the 2020/21 operating budget to support initiatives flowing from the Halifax Food Action Plan.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter

Section 7A Purposes of Municipality

"The purposes of the Municipality are to ...
(a) provide good government,

RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2

- (b) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality, and
- (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.”

Section 228 Purpose of Municipal Planning Strategy

“The purpose of a municipal planning strategy is to provide statements of policy to guide the development and management of the Municipality and, to further this purpose, to establish

- (a) policies that address problems and opportunities concerning the development of land and the effects of the development;
- (b) policies to provide a framework for the environmental, social and economic development within the Municipality;”

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Accept and approve in principle Part A of JustFOOD: Action Plan for the Halifax Region and proposal for development of Part B, as contained in this report; and
2. Direct the Mayor to make the Halifax Regional Municipality a signatory to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HRM and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA) have been collaborating for more than a decade towards a food strategy for a more healthy, just, and resilient food system. The JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan is the first comprehensive food strategy for the Region, created from extensive public engagement, municipal staff input, HFPA research, and best practices from around the globe.

Staff are recommending that Regional Council approve in principle Part A of the JustFOOD Action Plan, which sets the stage for collaboration, reports results from public engagements, and establishes 56 recommendations for positive food system transformation. Staff are also recommending that Regional Council direct the Mayor to make HRM a signatory to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, an international protocol aimed at tackling urban food-related issues. Joining over 250 cities across the globe will create opportunities to share best practices, access strategies for collaborative efforts to increase food security, network with global experts, and tap into recommendations and performance measures for food action.

The development of Part A has created significant momentum and dedication to continuing to work together to address this complex and growing issue. This report outlines the next steps toward creating strategies for tangible change. Approval of Part A does not require additional investment but progressing to Part B will include development of budgets and funding streams (municipal and other) to support the recommendations, which will be prepared for consideration for 2024/25 fiscal. The development of strategies for Part B will continue to use a community-based, collective-impact approach to realize Year 1 and In-Progress Recommendations while progressing the capacity for food system change in HRM.

An Executive Summary of Part A of the JustFOOD Action Plan can be found in Attachment 1 of this report.

BACKGROUND

Origins of HRM’s Role in Collaborative Efforts to Increase Food Security

Details on the origins of the collaborations to develop the first food strategy for the Halifax Region are available on pages 30-33 of Attachment 2. Additional information on the origins of JustFOOD, rationale for HRM’s leadership, and the relationship with HFPA in the [December 2019 Staff Report](#). A progress report on JustFOOD was provided in the [September 22, 2020 Staff Report](#).

A just and resilient local food system exists when all residents can access healthy and sustainably produced foods with dignity; when community health is assured; when food workers are supported; and when our agricultural and fishing communities thrive. JustFOOD Action Plan

Since Mayor Savage's 2013 [Conversation on a Healthy and Livable Community](#) and the 2014 Regional Plan directive to design communities that promote food security, the Municipality has had an evolving and growing role. This Region has a complex, adaptive food system as well as a rich history of local production and self-reliance. However, coordinated effort is needed to increase the equity and resiliency of the food system. The following are some of the key arguments for the development of a collaborative food strategy:

- **A high rate of household food insecurity:** One in five HRM households cannot access the food they need with the average rate of household food insecurity across HRM at 18.6%¹ compared to an average of 15.9%² across Canadian provinces.
- **It is becoming harder to afford food:** the rising costs of food have created a new and urgent strain on those who were already struggling to make ends meet; the prices for store bought food rose 10% in 2022 (11% in Nova Scotia), the fastest increase since 1981 and a huge price jump from 2% increase in 2021³. Employment does not guarantee food security - 60-65% of food insecure households are in the workforce⁴.
- **The food system is vulnerable to climate change and other destabilizing factors:** climate change impacts and the increasing frequency and severity of weather events is a significant concern for food supply. The average distance travelled by an item in the National Nutritious Food Basket to this Region is approximately 4,000 kms and vulnerability increases with every stage and kilometer in a supply chain⁵.
- **There are many inequities and injustices in the food system:** Income is the key determinant of food insecurity and those who face barriers to accumulation of wealth are disproportionately affected by food insecurity; the highest rates of food insecurity are found among Indigenous (30.7%) and Black households⁶. Similarly, some groups are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with lower income and equity seeking groups being more heavily impacted by disruptions and instabilities in food systems.

Additional local context and rationale for the JustFOOD Action Plan is on pg 15-30 in Attachment 2.

HRM is a founding member of the [Halifax Food Policy Alliance](#), alongside the Ecology Action Centre (EAC) and Nova Scotia Health Authority-Public Health (NSHA-PH). The group came together in 2013 to unify efforts and in recognition that all food system actors must work together to address this complex issue. The HFPA has grown into a multi-sectoral partnership of individuals and organizations working towards a common vision: **a Halifax where no one is hungry and everyone has nutritious food that they enjoy, for generations to come, sustained by local producers.**

The HFPA Steering Committee is co-chaired by HRM and the EAC, with representatives from NSH-PH, Feed Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Health Community Health Boards-Central Zone, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University (Food Law Workshop), and Halifax Public Libraries. The HFPA is endorsed by a network of over 700 individuals and organizations who have pledged to support the Halifax Food Charter and development of a food strategy.

The development of a regional food strategy has been the long-term goal of the HFPA, who have built the rationale and capacity for the JustFOOD Action Plan over the last decade, through three areas of influence:

1. SUPPORTING HEALTHY CHANGE: influencing policy and coordinating action to bring healthy food to everyone.
2. LEADING INFORMED ACTION: using evidence and insights from those with lived experience to

¹ Statistics Canada. (2022). [Canadian Income Survey](#): Public Use Microdata File.

² Tarasuk V, Li T, Fafard St-Germain AA. (2022) [Household food insecurity in Canada, 2021. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity](#) (PROOF).

³ Statistics Canada (2022). [Consumer Price Index: Annual Review, 2022](#).

⁴ Nova Scotia Finance and Treasury Board. (2022) ["Food Insecurity, 2019."](#)

⁵ Scott, J. & MacLeod, M. (2010) [Is Nova Scotia eating local? and if not... Where is our food coming from?](#)

⁶ PROOF (2022) ["Who Are Most at Risk of Household Food Insecurity?"](#)

inform action.

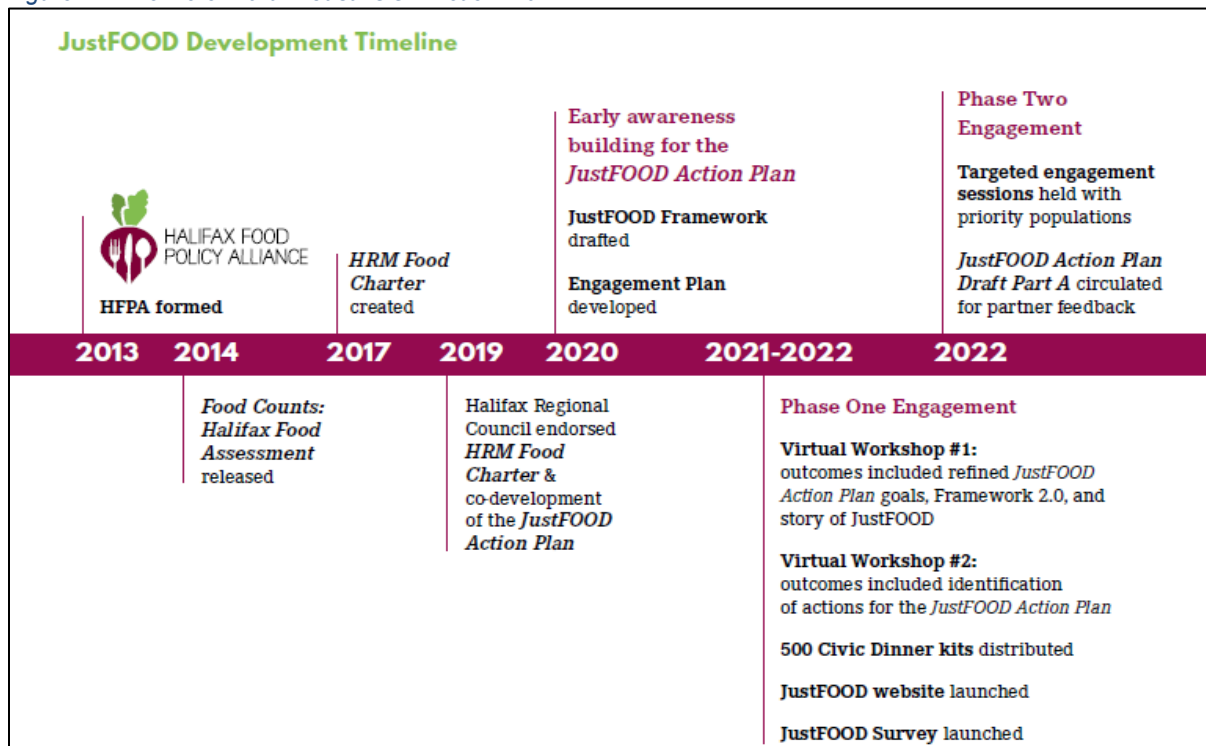
3. CONVENING COMMUNITY: connecting with others to have important conversations and to mobilize food-focused action and advocacy.

A letter of support and commitment to ongoing collaboration signed by Steering Committee members and key partners in advancing the JustFOOD Action Plan is found in Attachment 3.

Timeline

The timeline in Figure 1 provides an overview of key milestones for the development of Part A. Regional Council's [December 3, 2019 motion](#) formalized the partnership with HFPA, endorsed the [Halifax Food Charter](#), and committed resources to co-develop a regional food strategy to increase access to good food and strengthen the local food system. Work in 2020 focused on creating the Plan building blocks, raising awareness, generating interest in participating, distributing COVID-19 food supports, and researching impacts of the Pandemic. Most of the community engagement occurred in 2021 into 2022. The remainder of 2022 and 2023 has focused on sense-making the feedback, research, and best practices into the Part A recommendations and testing/refining these with Plan partners.

Figure 1: Timeline of Part A: JustFOOD Action Plan



Alignment with Municipal Initiatives and Involvement of Business Units

A snapshot of the alignment and involvement of key municipal initiatives in advancing JustFOOD can be found in Attachment 4.

The JustFOOD Action Plan is being developed in alignment with other municipal initiatives and business units, which are increasing including food action. Of note is the alignment with [HalifACT 2050](#) and the collaboration towards a more sustainable, resilient, and just food system. Food security is also one of three focus areas of the 2020 [Social Policy Strategy](#). In April 2022 the food security portfolio was moved to Government Relations & External Affairs (GREA) from Planning & Development to better connect food work to Social Policy and in recognition that food is a crosscutting municipal priority.

Food impacts and is impacted by practices and policies across the organization. Staff have been engaged in conversations on how food shows up in their work, what HRM can do to strengthen food security and the

food system, and what food can do to support municipal operations. “*Food for HRM & HRM for Food*” was the theme of the first staff food workshop in 2017 and the learnings were foundational to the municipally based recommendations in the Action Plan. Staff have been involved at all stages of Plan development to identify opportunities and challenges in their work that impact food, as well as in imagining what might be possible. Staff have supported public workshops, checked in regularly, reviewed reports and plan documents, and drafted portions of Part A. A goal since joining the HFPA has been to increase Staff capacity to bring a food lens to municipal work. Staff involvement has been crucial in developing the Action Plan and will be integral to the next phase of identifying HRM’s role, investments, and changes needed to realize the Part A recommendations.

Costs and Work Planning:

Prior to 2019, HRM’s investment in the HFPA had been through participation of two staff members on the Steering Committee (Mayor’s Office and P&D). Until the Pandemic, EAC and NSH-PH each had two staff supporting the HFPA. In 2019, [with the initiation of JustFOOD](#), Regional Council approved a contribution of \$60,000 in 2018/19 and 2019/20 for plan coordination, which was cost-shared and matched (exceeded) by contributions from HFPA members. Unfortunately, the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020 impacted progress as NSH-PH and other partners shifted their focus to emergency response. Since then, HRM, Ecology Action Centre staff, and contractors have addressed the capacity gap.

While progress was made in 2020/21 (see Figure 1 & [September 22, 2020 Staff Report](#)), a switch was made from matching contributions to utilizing the project budget to fund contract work through the EAC (HFPA administrative hosts). Table 1 in the Financial Implications section of this Report outlines municipal budgets, payments, and contributions, alongside direct and indirect contributions from HFPA Steering Committee members. Contributions to the EAC were made through contribution agreements solely for the development of JustFOOD, including creation of operational documents, hiring of contractors, expenses associated with engagement, development of tools to increase visibility and accessibility (including website development and hosting), and other activities.

Table 1 illustrates the shift from HFPA partners as majority contributors to HRM’s increased financial contribution and leadership. As emergency response eases, NSH-PH and other partners are coming back to the table. However, due to the scale of the project, the reduction in capacity from pre-COVID levels, and the effort required to progress to strategic actions, it is anticipated that HRM’s contribution will need to continue until the JustFOOD Action Plan is at a stage for Council and other funding partners to establish a multi-year budget for implementation and delivery.

DISCUSSION

Municipalities across the globe are increasingly active participants in promoting and championing change towards healthy, just, and sustainable food systems. HRM has been hailed as an Atlantic Canadian leader and food policy entrepreneur, but the municipality’s role does not occur in isolation. Success is dependent on strengthening collaborative effort across governments, institutions, communities, businesses, and organizations. Food action plans (strategies) are practical tools to build connections, identify actions, and coordinate effort towards a shared vision. The JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan will inform and shape municipal decision-making and activities over the next ten years and beyond. It will identify priorities and gain commitments from key actors; align and resource budgets and human resources; set policies and programming; and establish ownership, partnerships, and governance needed to make priorities a reality.

Part A of the JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region

Staff are recommending Council approve in principle the JustFOOD background, engagement findings, recommendations, and next steps towards implementation as presented in Part A of the JustFOOD Action Plan (Attachment 2). Council’s approval will trigger a public launch of Part A to share the results of community work and reinforce commitments to working together for implementation. Part A is intended to function as a living document that will be monitored, evaluated, and refined over time as necessary.

Development of Part B will commence once Council has approved Part A and will include commitments to action from food system partners as well as implementation strategies for the priority recommendations. A complete Action Plan, comprising Part A and Part B, will be brought to Halifax Regional Council for approval in 2023/24.

The Action Plan is based on collaborative governance and collective impact to advance food system transformation. Although the 56 recommendations exemplify many ways to work towards food system change, the Plan is not exhaustive. Much of the transformative work will depend on building collective capacity and increasing the ability to tackle the root causes of food insecurity. The recommendations were shaped and refined in consultation with key community partners.

The following is a high-level outline of the goals underpinning each set of recommendations organized under the JustFOOD principles. See pages 39-79 of Attachment 2 for the 56 recommendations.

PLAN PRINCIPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* assigns a set of recommendations to six structural principles.

The aims of each principle are:

- **Governance** recommendations aim to facilitate collaboration across government agencies and departments, align policies and programs that impact the food system, establish knowledge-sharing mechanisms, and develop strategies to monitor progress.
- **Social and Economic Equity** recommendations aim to increase community-level food sovereignty, recognizing that system-level change requires a shift away from charitable models. The recommendations aim to ensure that everyone can produce, prepare, and access food safely and with dignity, and that food system work directly addresses racial inequities and the root causes of food insecurity.
 - African Nova Scotian Food Justice and Sovereignty recommendations aim to celebrate the unique and vibrant food culture of the African Nova Scotian community, support strong traditions of homesteading and agriculture, and advance African Nova Scotian and Black food sovereignty.
 - Indigenous Food Justice and Sovereignty recommendations aim to enable and support Indigenous Peoples in their right to access healthy and culturally preferred foods as well as to exercise autonomy over where and how their food is produced, harvested, hunted, and fished. Indigenous food sovereignty necessitates the right to self-determination of Indigenous food systems.
- **Food Production** recommendations aim to support producer livelihoods and strengthen sustainable local food production by providing resources and services to urban and rural food producers, developing the infrastructure needed to support a local food system, enabling secure access to land for sustainable food production, and supporting short food chains.
- **Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution** recommendations aim to ensure a sustainable, fair, reliable, and efficient supply and distribution of food into and within the municipality.
- **Health, Wellness, and Resilience** recommendations aim to promote and support access to nutritious food and create the conditions for healthy food environments while promoting sustainable diets. These actions also aim to strengthen ecological resilience through improved air, water, and soil quality, and increased biodiversity. As climate change continues to threaten our food system, protecting the health of our environment is critical to strengthening community-level health and resilience.
- **Food Waste** recommendations aim to support the region to sustainably manage and reduce food waste by recovering and redistributing food, raising awareness of food loss and waste, and enabling effective composting.

In Progress and Year One Recommendations

Part A identifies recommendations that are in progress (IP) and those that should be prioritized for Year 1 (YR1) and brought to Council for consideration in Part B. In Progress recommendations such as work to develop the Regional Local Food Hub, advance the Food4All Map, and create an emergency food plan have evolved parallel and in consultation with the development of the Action Plan. The Year 1 priority recommendations are listed in Figure 2. Evolving the IP and Y1 recommendations will be the focus of the Working Groups and brought to Council for consideration in Part B of the Action Plan, prior to the 2024/25 budget process.

Additional information and status of the In Progress and Year 1 Recommendations can be found in Attachment 5.

Figure 2: Year 1 Priority Recommendations

GOAL	YEAR 1 PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS
Establish foundational food system governance mechanisms.	1. Establish and fund a Food Policy Council. 9d. Use key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate Plan progress.
Establish a central repository of food system resources.	5. Create a virtual community food hub. 6a. Expand the Food4All food resource map.
Support food sovereignty efforts among equity seeking communities.	2. Support the development of an Indigenous Food Governance Model and an African Nova Scotian Food Policy Council. Secure funding for both.
Support community-based food programs and grassroots initiatives that provide dignified access to good food.	1b.i. Develop a sustainable funding stream for community-based and grassroots food initiatives.
Create an enabling municipal environment for the supply, processing, and distribution of local food.	17. Use municipal facilities and assets to offer food programs, grow food, and support public food infrastructure. 38d. Allow community food markets, food-distribution hubs, and stable community supported agriculture distribution sites in municipal spaces.
Support community gardens and urban farms as important sites of urban food production and social inclusion.	32b.i. Establish a community plots program. 32b.ii. Create and fund a community garden and municipal food-production staff position.

Community Engagement

More detail on engagement priorities, opportunities, and findings can be found in Attachment B of the [September 22, 2020 Staff Report](#) and Pages 34-38 & Appendix 2 of Part A (Attachment 2)

The foundations, principles, and recommendations of Part A of the JustFOOD Action Plan were built through a creative and comprehensive engagement program designed to offer welcoming spaces for residents to freely share their feedback. The following aspects were key to the success of engagements:

- Working with community experts like the Diversity & Inclusion advisers, Libraries, and service providers to connect to communities, especially those often not engaged, and to build trust.
- Collaborating with community partners to ensure engagements were convenient, safe, and relevant for participants. This included smudging ceremonies, locales across the Region, and add-ons to other events where people were already gathering.
- Offering a variety of supports to reduce participation barriers and providing fair compensation in recognition of the value of community wisdom and the preciousness of time.
- Designing a range of ways to be involved including online surveys, focus groups, community-hosted workshops, and take-home meal kits accompanied by conversation guides.
- Prioritizing public health and safety while providing space for lively dialogue. As this work occurred during the Pandemic, virtual participation and at-home activities were offered when possible.
- Offering food such as civic dinner kits, emergency food hampers, and sharing food at in person engagements. A highlight was the sharing of a community meal of moose stew and bannock crisp as part of the Mi'kmaw Child Development Centre engagement.

Engagement for Part A occurred in two main phases:

- Phase One: community and partner participation to create foundations for the Plan, identifying the key principles, goals, and strategies necessary to develop effective actions.
- Phase Two: community and partner feedback on the recommendations generated during and following Phase One of engagement. This feedback was used to identify gaps, explore emerging opportunities, and revise proposed actions.

Engagements reached a broad audience with estimates that the project team had direct connections with 29 community-based organizations, 6 provincial partners, 9 HRM business units, and thousands of residents.

Community feedback is clearly reflected in the Part A recommendations. Broadly speaking, community members highlighted the need for a comprehensive food strategy that acts to create a more equitable food system, addresses the root causes of food insecurity, localizes the food system, disrupts colonialism and systemic racism, and builds community capacity and food system resilience.

More detail on what was heard can be found in pg. 37-38 and Appendix 2 of Part A (Attachment 2).

Next Steps for Implementation

Additional detail on next steps can be found in Pages 82-84 of Part A (Attachment 2)

Figure 3 outlines the next steps for progressing Part A of the Action Plan towards Part B and the next stage of Plan development for Council and other key partners approval.

Figure 3: Next Steps in Implementation

Next Steps Towards Part B



STEP 1: JOIN AN INTERNATIONAL FOOD MOVEMENT - Signing onto the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP)

Additional information on the MUFPP can be found in Attachment 6.

As a [municipal food policy entrepreneur](#), Staff are recommending that Mayor Savage make HRM a signatory to the MUFPP, an international protocol aimed at tackling food-related issues at the urban level. The MUFPP is the first international agreement among over 250 cities across the globe, committed to:

“Sustainable food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse, that provide healthy and affordable food to all people in a human rights-based framework, that minimize waste and conserve biodiversity while adapting to and mitigating impacts of climate change.”

Becoming a signatory brings benefits to HRM with little to no costs. There are no costs or targets for MUFPP signatory cities. The protocol is voluntary and intended to provide strategic options for cities aiming to achieve more sustainable food systems, options that can be selected and adapted to local context. Upon Regional Council’s approval, the Municipality would identify a designate to follow all communications and activities related to the MUFPP and Mayor Savage would complete a subscription form declaring the following:

- *I have examined the text of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and submitted the text to internal procedures for approval, if applicable;*
- *I agree with the principles and pledge to implement the commitments stated in the Pact; and*
- *I undersign the Pact on behalf of the municipality/local authority I represent.*

Becoming a MUFPP signatory creates opportunities to share best practices, build partnerships to accelerate momentum towards more sustainable food systems, access support for decision-making processes, and network with global experts in food and sustainability. Moreover, the development of JustFOOD is based on the MUFPP pillars. The Plan proposes to adapt MUFPP indicators to create tailored performance measures on progress towards achieving a healthy and sustainable food system, as well as specific Plan recommendations. Becoming a signatory also celebrates HRM’s continued commitment to being a municipal food policy entrepreneur, a leader in climate action, and collaborator in efforts to increase access to good food and strengthen our local food system.

HRM would be the 5th Canadian municipality to become a signatory to the MUFPP, joining Guelph, Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. HRM staff have participated in the pan-Canadian Food Communities Network’s workshops on the MUFPP and have had conversations with representatives from the four Canadian signatories. None cited any risks or drawbacks with being part of the MUFPP international community and have found access to best practices and the framework offered by the MUFPP beneficial to their work.

STEP 2: ESTABLISH WORKING GROUPS:

“We are humbled to be a part of this work and want to thank you for inviting us to this conversation. It has been nothing less than an excellent opportunity to work with some fantastic people. Thank you all for your time, energy, and expertise. There is no doubt in my mind that I benefited from this working group, and our community will benefit from this work.” JustFOOD Working Group member

Following Council’s endorsement of Part A, work will continue to establish Working Groups responsible for developing the implementation strategies for Part B. Working Groups will bring together a range of community and government partners with both professional and lived experience. The working group model is a community-based, collective-impact approach to implementing key recommendations while building greater capacity for food system change in HRM.

Figure 4 outlines the working groups proposed to advance the In-Progress and Year 1 recommendations. Part A engagements and community partner conversations offered the working group model as way to continue to be involved. The Working Groups will build off previous engagement participants, Municipal and Provincial staff, and members of ANS, Indigenous, and Disability Advisory Groups, as well as recruiting new advisers. The following is a snapshot of the working groups:

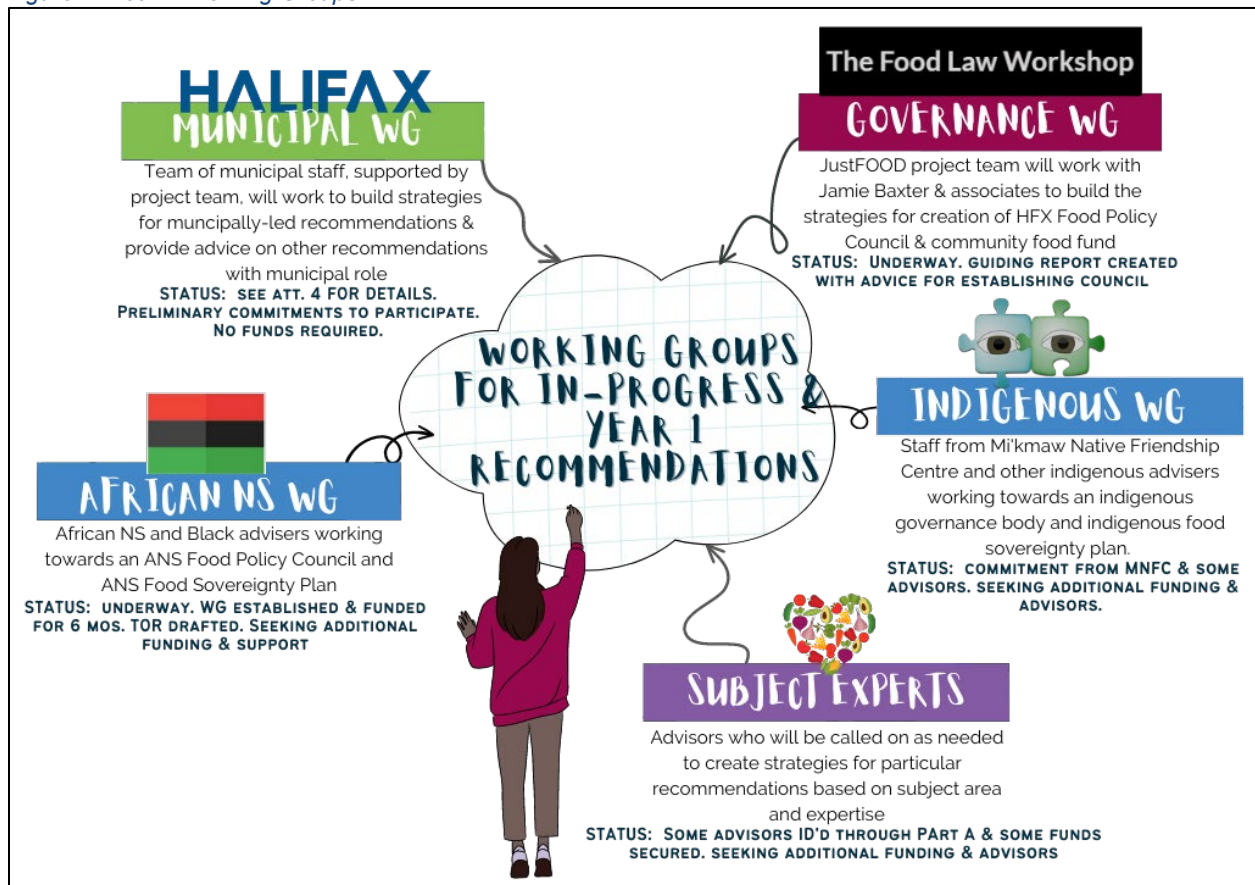
- Governance - the project team will continue working with Baxter Research to establish a Food Policy Council and community food funding stream.
- Municipal Working Group - a team of staff working together to develop strategies for municipally led recommendations and supports for the recommendations with a municipal role.
- Indigenous and ANS Working Groups - two separate working groups, one focused on creating

strategies towards an ANS food policy council and food sovereignty plan, and the other working towards an indigenous food governance body and food sovereignty plan.

- Subject Experts - advisors who will be called on as needed to create strategies for individual recommendations.

To recognize the value of community wisdom and barriers to equitable participation, Working Group members will be compensated for their time and expertise. Some members, such as municipal staff, NSHA-PH, etc. will be covered by their employers. A portion of the project budget will go towards compensation and community outreach for the working groups. NSHA-PH have committed funds towards the Working Groups, the ANS working group has submitted a grant proposal to support their work, and the project team continue to explore other funding streams to increase capacity and activities of the working groups.

Figure 4: Year 1 Working Groups

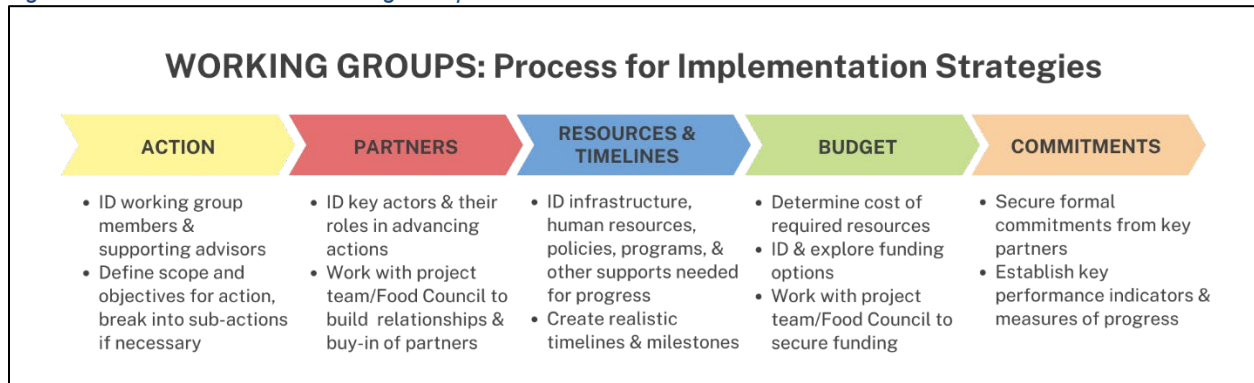


STEP 3: DEVELOPING STRATEGIES

Figure 5 outlines the key considerations that will guide the Working Groups to develop strategies for making recommendations come to life. While the Working Groups are leading strategy development, there will also be the need to engage with key actors and test strategies with the community and stakeholders.

As the Action Plan assumes ongoing collaborations across institutions, organizations, and communities, HRM will have different roles and responsibilities depending on ability to influence a recommendation. These roles may include leading, advocating, partnering, and/or funding

Figure 5: Considerations for Working Groups



STEP 4: CREATE THE HALIFAX FOOD POLICY COUNCIL



The primary recommendation of the Action Plan is the development of the Halifax Food Council to replace the HFPA. The rationale is to move from a place a privilege (majority of HFPA members were paid by their employers to participate) to a food council that centres racial equity and increases community power and influence. The proposed Food Council would act as a legal entity for coordinating, guiding, and evaluating the implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.

The Baxter Research Group (Dalhousie Schulich School of Law) has been researching an appropriate structure for JustFOOD governance as part of a larger SSHRC grant on food governance. Visit [here](#) for their report outlining the key criteria for success and recommended structure for the new Council. The project team will continue to work with the Baxter Group to finalize a governance model and develop a Terms of Reference. Then work will begin to recruit members to the Food Council, ensuring equity and community representation, as well as legal incorporation. Establishing the Council will require funding for staffing, operations, and the establishment of a funding stream to support community-based food initiatives that address food access

and build the food system. The Food Council would consult, collaborate, and support the autonomous African Nova Scotian Food Council and indigenous food governance bodies, once established.

STEP 5: ESTABLISH A SET OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS USING THE MUFPP

Key performance indicators will be developed to monitor and evaluate food system progress. This work will require data collection and research; consultation with governments, institutions, community organizations, and community members; and strategic planning to develop a regular assessment and review protocol for the chosen indicators. Membership in the MUFPP will enable access to other regions who have utilized the MUFPP indicators, which can be tailored to the JustFOOD context. The value of the MUFPP indicators to food strategies can be seen in the 2018 [update to the Toronto Food Strategy](#) which was based on the MUFPP Monitoring Framework.

MOVING FORWARD IN COLLABORATION

Aligning the *JustFOOD Action Plan* with the *Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy*.

The Province is working to develop a Food and Beverage Strategy to develop policies, programs, and initiatives to raise awareness of, improve access to, and increase the production of healthy local food.

JustFOOD community engagement findings and recommendations requiring Provincial leadership and advancement have been regularly shared with the Strategy leads. The Province has completed engagement with key food system actors, including HRM/HFPA, agriculture and other sectors, and community-level service providers. They are signaling that a “What We Heard” report will be released in the Spring 2023 with the Strategy anticipated later in the year. Moving forward, the project team will continue to provide feedback on the development of the Strategy and seek opportunities for alignment and amplification of the JustFOOD Action Plan and Provincial Strategy.

Universal School Food Program

On March 1st, 2022 Regional Council [endorsed](#) the Coalition for Healthy School Food’s call for development of a universal cost-shared, healthy school food program for Canada, the accompanying report can be accessed [here](#). The [NS Advisory to the Coalition for Healthy School Food](#) brings together stakeholders from sectors across Nova Scotia in collective advocacy towards the development of a pan-Canadian school food program that meets the diverse needs of Nova Scotia school communities. The Federal Government has committed funding for school food, but the funding transfer and program have not yet happened. Members of the project team sit at the Coalition table to stay updated on progress towards a universal school food program.

Collaborative Governance and Collective Impact

Community has been and will continue to be the driver of the JustFOOD Action Plan. Moving forward, the Plan will continue to rely on the passion and knowledge of partners and stakeholders in the community. They will be key to the development, testing, and refinement of the strategies to ensure they are realistic and impactful, as well as ensuring that key actors are living up to their commitments and that the Action Plan is having a positive impact.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional costs associated with approval in principle of Part A of the JustFOOD Action Plan or becoming a signatory to the MUFPP. The project costs can be accommodated under GREA’s operational budget E400-8001. If approved, Staff will return with the development of strategies for Part B Report, and associated budget requests.

Table 1: Contributions to the Development of the JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan

Fiscal: Municipal JustFOOD Budget	Municipal Payments & Contributions	HFPA Contributions & Total Budget
2018/19 - 2019/20: \$60,000 approved by RC through Dec 2019 initiation	\$60,000 through EAC (host for HFPA) via contribution agreement (CA) #1, dated March 30, 2020, for work in fiscals 2018-2020	HFPA: \$238,730 (over 2 fiscals) Total Budget: \$298,730
2020/21: \$100,000 in P&D budget, - \$44,400 spent, \$55,600 remaining	\$15,000 to EAC for contractors, \$10,000 emergency food hampers, \$19,400 engagement expenses = \$44,400	\$44,400 HFPA contributions not calculated for this period
2021/22: \$55,600 carryover + \$125,000 P&D budget \$180,600	\$56,500 to EAC via CA #2 for contractors and engagement supports, dated March 21 for April-Sept 21 \$125,000 to EAC via CA #3 dated March 2022 for Oct 21-July 22 for contractors, working groups, honoraria, engagement, & website	HFPA April -Sep 21 \$14,400 HFPA Oct- July 22 \$35,000 HFPA Total: \$49,400 Total Budget: \$230,000

Fiscal: Municipal JustFOOD Budget	Municipal Payments & Contributions	HFPA Contributions & Total Budget
	\$180,600 (for 16 months of work)	(Over 16 months)
2022/23: \$165,000 in CAO's (GREAs) budget	\$165,000 to EAC via CA#4 dated Oct 22 for Aug 22- July 23 for contractors, working groups for strategy development, knowledge products & website.	TBD
2023/24: Proposed \$165,000 in CAO's (GREAs) budget	TBD: Anticipate \$165,000 to EAC via CA#5 Aug 23 – July 24, <i>conditional on progress of Part B and timing of budget ask for implementation of Part B</i>	TBD

RISK CONSIDERATION

There is little risk associated with approval in principle of Part A of the Action Plan. Managing expectations to match what HRM has the authority/leverage to achieve on its own and reliance on good will and advocacy to shift major factors in food insecurity like income supports and living wages are risks in collaborative food systems work. These risks are being managed through clear messaging, role identification, and practical recommendations.

There are significant risks associated with not progressing with the development of the JustFOOD Action Plan including:

- Public Perception Risks: the creation of the JustFOOD Action Plan has been identified as a priority project and deliverable since 2019. There is a risk of poor service being perceived by citizens because of an inability to meet expectations and strategic alignments.
- Citizen and Communities Risks: as HRM citizens are struggling to access affordable and quality food, impacting that advancement of safe, involved, inclusive and affordable communities;
- Climate Change Risks & Sever Weather Impacts: a focus of JustFOOD is the creation of a more resilient food system, less dependent on long supply chains and better able to supply/respond in times of emergency. Not advancing the Action Plan will delay this work.

There are no risks identified with HRM becoming a signatory to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact as there are no costs or specific targets associated with being a signatory city. Becoming a signatory will bring many benefits to municipal food work as well as serve as a celebration of the municipality's ongoing commitment to this work.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The development of the Halifax Food Charter and Part A of the JustFOOD Action Plan have involved significant community engagement. For more detail please see the Community Engagement section of this report as well as Attachment B of the [September 22, 2020 Staff Report](#) and Pages 34-38 & Appendix 2 of Part A (Attachment 2).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The Action Plan advances HalifACT and Regional Plan objectives to *improve food security and food systems resilience* and mitigation of climate change is a core component of the work. of the JustFOOD Action Plan. Recommendations are working towards a more resilient and localized food system where residents have increased access to good food and increased capacity/sovereignty over food. Shortening supply chains through more opportunities for local food, production, identifying and protecting critical infrastructure, promoting sustainable diets, decreasing food waste/loss, and supporting more sustainable farming practices are integral to the Plan. Emergency food access is also recognized as an important consideration in responses to extreme weather events.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could choose to:

1. Not approve in principle and accept Part A of the JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region. This is not recommended due to significant community effort involved in creating Part A and the commitments and momentum towards collaborating to develop Part B, as outlined in this Report.
2. Not direct Mayor Savage to make HRM a signatory to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. This is not recommended as there is little cost and much benefit to becoming a signatory city, as outlined in this Report.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1:	Executive Summary JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan Part A
ATTACHMENT 2:	JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan Part A
ATTACHMENT 3:	Letter of Support from Plan Partners
ATTACHMENT 4:	Aligned Municipal Initiatives & JustFOOD Involvement
ATTACHMENT 5:	Work in Progress and Year 1 Recommendations
ATTACHMENT 6:	Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Leticia Smillie, Planner III, Government Relations and External Affairs, 902.266.4958

Executive Summary

JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART A - FEBRUARY 2023

HALIFAX





Executive Summary

This document is the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region: Part A*. Part B of the Plan will be developed following the public launch of Part A.

Part A sets the stage for our regional food system, captures public engagement findings, and lays out a set of recommendations for positive food system transformation. Part A is intended to function as a living document that will be monitored, evaluated, and refined over time as necessary.

Part B of the Plan will include formal commitments to action from food system partners as well as implementation strategies needed to make Plan recommendations a reality. A complete action Plan, comprising Part A and Part B, will be brought to Halifax Regional Council for approval in 2023.

The development of the JustFOOD Action Plan is co-led by the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance.

HALIFAX



HALIFAX FOOD
POLICY ALLIANCE



Introduction

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The creation, adoption, and implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region* is a significant investment in our future. It is designed to bring communities and key players

together to improve food security, reduce food inequities, support inclusive economic growth, foster resilience in the face of climate change, and promote the health and well-being of all residents. The success of the Plan will depend on collective action and collaboration between governments, individuals, businesses, and agencies, each understanding their unique role and contribution. The Province's forthcoming *Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy* represents an opportunity for coordinating regional food system action. Food system solutions must build on the expertise of food system innovators as well as the community wisdom of our farmers and fishers, organizations, residents, and neighbours.

Together, we will act to create a just, healthy, and sustainable food system for the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Photo: Nourish NS



JustFOOD Action Plan Development

The development of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* is co-led by HRM and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA).

Formed in 2013, the HFPA is a partnership of diverse individuals and organizations representing the food system, led by members including the Ecology Action Centre, Nova Scotia Health Public Health, Nova Scotia Health Community Health Boards - Central Zone, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University, Feed Nova Scotia, and Halifax Public Libraries. The HFPA has over 700 supporters and 2,200 social media followers.

Overview

In 2017, the HFPA released the *HRM Food Charter*. This document envisions a food system that will strengthen the health of our people, our communities, and our ecosystems. In 2019, Halifax Regional Council endorsed the *HRM Food Charter* and committed to supporting the development of a municipal food strategy, the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*.

Photo: Emily Stevens



Engagement

Public engagement for the Plan began in March 2021, with the majority of engagements wrapping up in August 2022. Engagements were designed to ensure that community concerns and aspirations were consistently understood, considered, and directly reflected in Plan recommendations. Public engagement was further intended to (1) profile the local food system; (2) identify measurable goals, priorities, and actions for the *JustFOOD Action Plan*; (3) foster relationships and readiness for action among key local partners; and (4) encourage community members to take part in food system action.

Engagement opportunities were planned in consultation with community partners. A variety of supports were provided to reduce participation barriers, and compensation was provided to community members. Some of the methods used to capture public feedback included online surveys, focus groups, community-hosted workshops, and take-home meal kits accompanied by conversation guides.

HRM AND THE HFPA ENGAGED WITH:

- **29 community-based organizations**
- **6 provincial partners**
- **9 HRM business units**
- **Thousands of HRM residents**



A summary of engagement activities can be found on [page 34](#), and a detailed report can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

Based on engagement feedback and food system research, HRM and the HFPA chose to structure Plan recommendations according to the pillars of the [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact \(MUFPP\)](#). MUFPP is an international protocol aimed at tackling food-related issues at the municipal level.

Influenced by this pact, the following principles are used to structure the *JustFOOD Action Plan*:



Governance



Social and Economic Equity



Food Production



Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution



Health, Wellness, and Resilience



Food Waste

The proposed recommendations associated with each of these principles are designed to mobilize community, government, and other key actors to take collaborative and coordinated action on food system issues and advance food system transformation.

Recommendations were carefully crafted using engagement feedback. Recommendations were also drafted using ongoing research and best practices from other regions. Early drafts were shared with community partners and key actors for feedback and comment.

JustFOOD Development Timeline



HALIFAX FOOD
POLICY ALLIANCE

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created

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Engagement Plan
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Targeted engagement sessions held with priority populations

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outcomes included refined *JustFOOD Action Plan* goals, Framework 2.0, and story of JustFOOD

Virtual Workshop #2:
outcomes included identification of actions for the *JustFOOD Action Plan*

500 Civic Dinner kits distributed

JustFOOD website launched

JustFOOD Survey launched

Plan Principles and Structure

The *JustFOOD Action Plan* assigns a set of recommendations to each of the six structural principles. The aims of each principle are outlined here:



Governance recommendations aim to facilitate collaboration across government agencies and departments, align policies and programs that impact the food system, establish knowledge-sharing mechanisms, and develop strategies to monitor progress.



Social and Economic Equity recommendations aim to increase community-level food sovereignty, recognizing that significant system-level change requires a shift away from charitable models. The recommendations aim to ensure that everyone is able to produce, prepare, and access food safely and with dignity, and that food system work directly addresses racial inequities and the root causes of food insecurity.

- **African Nova Scotian Food Justice and Sovereignty** recommendations aim to celebrate the unique and vibrant food culture of the African Nova Scotian community, support strong traditions of homesteading and agriculture, and advance African Nova Scotian and Black food sovereignty.
- **Indigenous Food Justice and Sovereignty** recommendations aim to enable and support Indigenous Peoples in their right to access healthy and culturally preferred foods as well as to exercise autonomy over where and how their food is produced, harvested, hunted, and fished. Indigenous food sovereignty necessitates the right to self-determination of Indigenous food systems.



Food Production recommendations aim to support producer livelihoods and strengthen sustainable local food production by providing resources and services to urban and rural food producers, developing the infrastructure needed to support a local food system, enabling secure access to land for sustainable food production, and supporting short food chains.



Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution

recommendations aim to ensure a sustainable, fair, reliable, and efficient supply and distribution of food into and within the municipality.



Health, Wellness, and Resilience recommendations aim to promote and support access to nutritious food and create the conditions for healthy food environments while promoting sustainable diets. These actions also aim to strengthen ecological resilience through improved air, water, and soil quality, and increased biodiversity. As climate change continues to threaten our food system, protecting the health of our environment is critical to strengthening community-level health and resilience.



Food Waste recommendations aim to support the municipality to sustainably manage and reduce food waste by recovering and redistributing food, raising awareness of food loss and waste, and enabling effective composting.

Next Steps

Request that Halifax Regional Council sign onto the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

By signing on to MUFPP, HRM will join a community of cities committed to the development of:

“Sustainable food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse, that provide healthy and affordable food to all people in a human rights-based framework, that minimize waste and conserve biodiversity while adapting to and mitigating impacts of climate change.”

As an official signatory, HRM will have access to an established monitoring framework to measure the impact of actions and compare progress with other jurisdictions using the same benchmarks.

Establish JustFOOD Working Groups

Following the public launch of Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, HRM and the HFPA will establish formal JustFOOD Working Groups. These groups will be responsible for developing the implementation strategies in Part B of the Plan.

JustFOOD Working Groups will bring together a range of community and government partners with both professional and lived experience. The working-group model is a community-based, collective-impact approach to implementing key recommendations while building greater capacity for food system change in HRM. JustFOOD Working Group members will be compensated for their time and expertise; however, it is anticipated that some members' involvement may be covered by their employers.

Formalize Commitments and Develop Implementation Strategies

When Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* is released, JustFOOD Working Groups will begin to develop implementation strategies. Part B of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* will detail these implementation strategies and will include commitments to action on behalf of food system partners. A final Plan, comprising both Part A and Part B, will be brought to Halifax Regional Council for endorsement in 2023.





Photo: Snickerdoodle Photography

Form a Food Policy Council

Implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* will require cross-sector governance. HRM and the HFPA propose that a Food Policy Council be created to replace the HFPA as a collaborative governing body. The proposed Food Policy Council is anticipated to act as a legal entity that will be tasked with coordinating, guiding, and evaluating the implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, which will include oversight of the JustFOOD Working Groups.

A governance report that details considerations and provides a recommended model, entitled *Governance Structures for the Regional Food System in HRM*, has been prepared by partners at the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University ([see Appendix 1](#)).

Monitor Progress

Recommendations in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* are based on the six categories of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. By signing onto MUFPP, HRM will be able to use an established monitoring framework to measure the impact of actions in the region and compare progress with other jurisdictions using the same benchmarks. The proposed Food Policy Council will track and review progress to ensure that (1) the council is operating effectively and adapting to the complex work of food system change and (2) the priority recommendations made in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* are progressing. Monitoring steps will include:

- Publishing an annual review of a selection of *JustFOOD Action Plan* indicators
- Providing regular updates on implementation progress, including an annual update to Halifax Regional Council and a comprehensive five-year review
- Reporting interim progress online at justfoodhalifax.ca
- Using the virtual food hub to share Plan progress, identify emerging issues, and adapt recommendations based on research and ongoing discussion
- Using community-based tools for both external and internal evaluation to increase the positive impact of *JustFOOD Action Plan* on our food system while supporting citizen-driven change

First-Year Recommendations

The recommendations made in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* reflect extensive community and partner feedback as well as best practices. They are at different stages, some with significant progress like the coalition developing a business plan for the Halifax Local Food Hub, some with initial work like the beta version of the Food4All map, and many with work yet to begin.

HRM and the HFPA recognize that a Food Policy Council cannot immediately tackle every recommendation made in the Plan and that work is required to create a solid foundation for collective action, leadership, and shared responsibilities. The following table identifies 10 priority recommendations for the first year of Plan implementation.

GOAL	YEAR 1 PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS
Establish foundational food system governance mechanisms.	<p>1. Establish and fund a Food Policy Council.</p> <p>9d. Use key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate Plan progress.</p>
Establish a central repository of food system resources.	<p>5. Create a virtual community food hub.</p> <p>6a. Expand the Food4All food resource map.</p>
Support food sovereignty efforts among equity seeking communities.	<p>2. Support the development of an Indigenous Food Governance Model and an African Nova Scotian Food Policy Council. Secure funding for both.</p>
Support community-based food programs and grassroots initiatives that provide dignified access to good food.	<p>1b.i. Develop a sustainable funding stream for community-based and grassroots food initiatives.</p>
Create an enabling municipal environment for the supply, processing, and distribution of local food.	<p>17. Use municipal facilities and assets to offer food programs, grow food, and support public food infrastructure.</p> <p>38d. Allow community food markets, food-distribution hubs, and stable community supported agriculture distribution sites in municipal spaces.</p>
Support community gardens and urban farms as important sites of urban food production and social inclusion.	<p>32b.i. Establish a community plots program.</p> <p>32b.ii. Create and fund a community garden and municipal food-production staff position.</p>



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justfoodhalifax.ca



JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART A - FEBRUARY 2023

HALIFAX



HALIFAX FOOD
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Acknowledgements

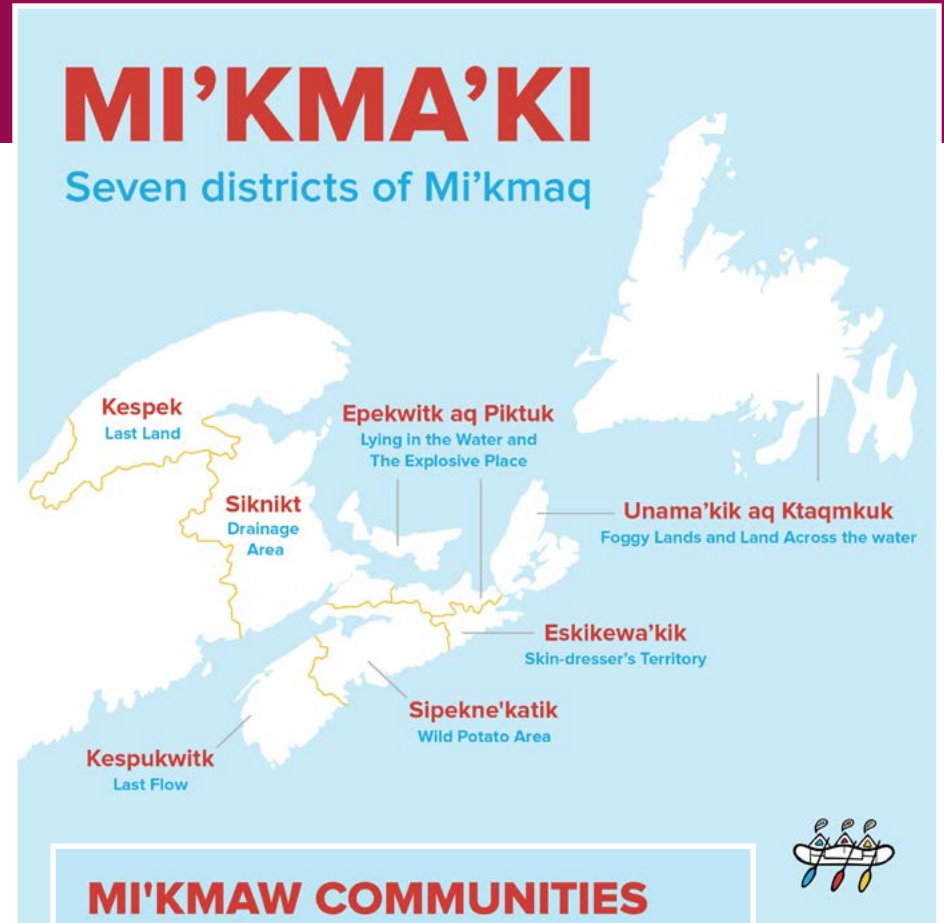
Land Acknowledgement

The meetings, work, and envisioned goals of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* take place on the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq First Nation.

We make this land acknowledgement to recognize Indigenous claims to unceded territory and Indigenous lineages of agriculture. We do so in order to express respect to the land and elders who were here before us. Indigenous Peoples were growing, harvesting, hunting, fishing, and collecting food in a healthy, sustainable, just way for generations before colonization. We specifically acknowledge the Mi'kmaq for their stewardship of the land and the importance of consciously working towards reconciliation in our work.

This acknowledgement challenges us to ask questions that bear directly on this project, such as: how to link to Mi'kmaw governance, what is the role of treaty, and what implications does this work have for the land and sea that local food comes from?

In mainstream settler culture, it is easy to forget how our region nourishes us. Important knowledge on the problems that we are trying to understand and the solutions that we are trying to develop exists in traditionally marginalized communities. As we consider how to increase access to food and strengthen the food system, we acknowledge the need to steward our region wisely by learning from Indigenous wisdom and values of ecological health, social justice, and food sovereignty.



Maps: 2023 North American Indigenous Games



Acknowledgements

The *JustFOOD Action Plan* was developed with input from municipal and provincial governments, 29 community organizations, and thousands of HRM residents who generously shared their wisdom and experiences. In particular, we are grateful for the contributions of the African Nova Scotian Advisory Group, Reclaiming Our Roots, the Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre, No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia, and the Disability Community Advisory Group.

Members of the Halifax Food Policy Alliance prepared the Plan, including:

- Leticia Smillie, Project Manager, Halifax Regional Municipality
- More Vail and Ben Lemphers, Ecology Action Centre
- Laura Bellussi and Heather Monahan, Nova Scotia Health
- Jamie Baxter, Anna Giddy, and Adrienne Klein, Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University
- Plan document and website design by Dean Gallant, Pinwheel Communication Design



Executive Summary

JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART A - FEBRUARY 2023

HALIFAX





Executive Summary

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Part A sets the stage for our regional food system, captures public engagement findings, and lays out a set of recommendations for positive food system transformation. Part A is intended to function as a living document that will be monitored, evaluated, and refined over time as necessary.

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HALIFAX FOOD
POLICY ALLIANCE



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Photo: Nourish NS



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HALIFAX FOOD
POLICY ALLIANCE

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Monitor Progress

Recommendations in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* are based on the six categories of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. By signing onto MUFPP, HRM will be able to use an established monitoring framework to measure the impact of actions in the region and compare progress with other jurisdictions using the same benchmarks. The proposed Food Policy Council will track and review progress to ensure that (1) the council is operating effectively and adapting to the complex work of food system change and (2) the priority recommendations made in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* are progressing. Monitoring steps will include:

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- Providing regular updates on implementation progress, including an annual update to Halifax Regional Council and a comprehensive five-year review
- Reporting interim progress online at justfoodhalifax.ca
- Using the virtual food hub to share Plan progress, identify emerging issues, and adapt recommendations based on research and ongoing discussion
- Using community-based tools for both external and internal evaluation to increase the positive impact of *JustFOOD Action Plan* on our food system while supporting citizen-driven change

First-Year Recommendations

The recommendations made in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* reflect extensive community and partner feedback as well as best practices. They are at different stages, some with significant progress like the coalition developing a business plan for the Halifax Regional Food Hub, some with initial work like the beta version of the Food4All map, and many with work yet to begin.

HRM and the HFPA recognize that a Food Policy Council cannot immediately tackle every recommendation made in the Plan and that work is required to create a solid foundation for collective action, leadership, and shared responsibilities. The following table identifies 10 priority recommendations for the first year of Plan implementation.

GOAL	YEAR 1 PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS
Establish foundational food system governance mechanisms.	<p>1. Establish and fund a Food Policy Council.</p> <p>9d. Use key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate Plan progress.</p>
Establish a central repository of food system resources.	<p>5. Create a virtual community food hub.</p> <p>6a. Expand the Food4All food resource map.</p>
Support food sovereignty efforts among equity seeking communities.	<p>2. Support the development of an Indigenous Food Governance Model and an African Nova Scotian Food Policy Council. Secure funding for both.</p>
Support community-based food programs and grassroots initiatives that provide dignified access to good food.	<p>1b.i. Develop a sustainable funding stream for community-based and grassroots food initiatives.</p>
Create an enabling municipal environment for the supply, processing, and distribution of local food.	<p>17. Use municipal facilities and assets to offer food programs, grow food, and support public food infrastructure.</p> <p>38d. Allow community food markets, food-distribution hubs, and stable community supported agriculture distribution sites in municipal spaces.</p>
Support community gardens and urban farms as important sites of urban food production and social inclusion.	<p>32b.i. Establish a community plots program.</p> <p>32b.ii. Create and fund a community garden and municipal food-production staff position.</p>

Background Report

JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART A - FEBRUARY 2023

HALIFAX



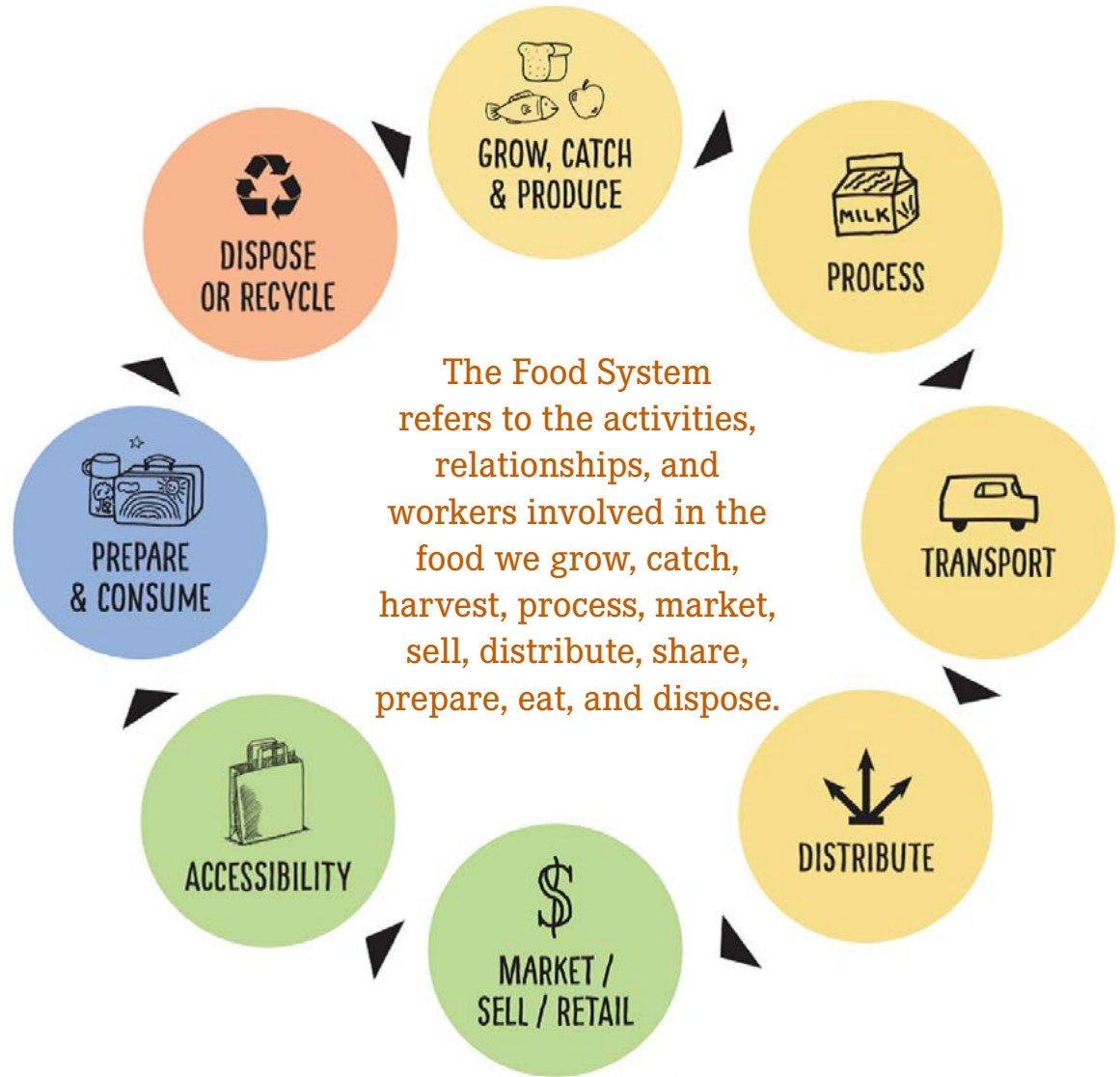


Background Report

Foundations

Food connects us all. It nourishes and sustains us and is at the heart of celebrations across diverse cultures and traditions. A strong and resilient **food system** can foster vibrant neighbourhoods, generate thriving businesses, and restore traditional livelihoods. In contrast, the inherent risks of a weak food system are enormous, threatening community resilience, the environment, our economy, and our well-being.

The *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region* is a long-range strategy for building a healthy, just, and sustainable food system. As the region's first food strategy, the *JustFOOD Action Plan* proposes measurable steps to support community food security based on a vision of HRM in which no one is hungry, food and people are celebrated, the local economy is strong, and the environment is protected for generations to come. The *JustFOOD Action Plan* recognizes that while food is a universal right, structural inequities challenge equitable access.



Foundational concepts of the JustFOOD approach to food system change:

FOOD JUSTICE seeks to ensure that the benefits and risks of where, what, and how food is grown, produced, transported, distributed, accessed, and eaten are shared among us.³ People working within a just food system are treated with dignity and are compensated fairly. Just food systems ensure that people have equitable opportunities to participate in food system activities and to take part in decisions that affect them.⁴

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY is the right of peoples to define their own food systems, including the right to healthy and culturally preferred food, produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods.⁵

HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS provide supportive environments for equitable access to safe and nutritious foods as a resource for physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental health for all people. In a healthy food system, people are able to satisfy their needs and preferences, and have the knowledge, resources, and support necessary to do so.⁶

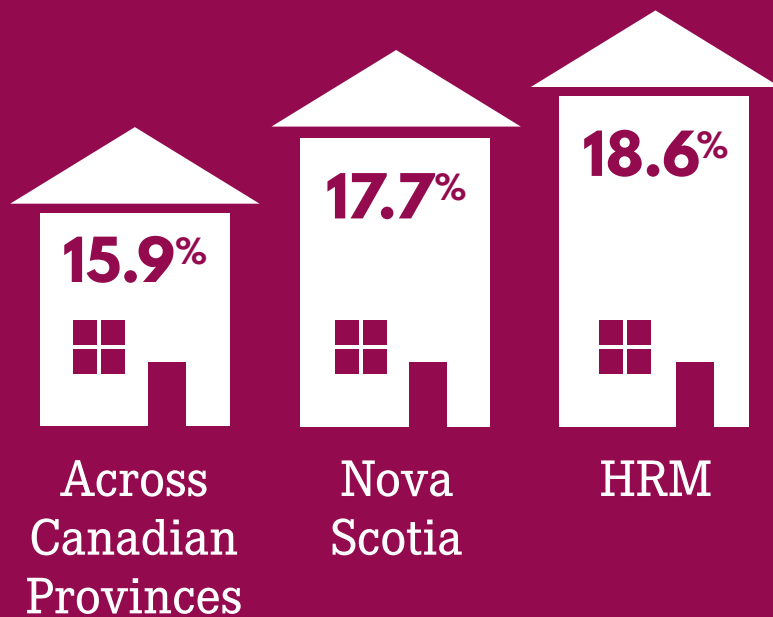
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS maintain the health of the environment without jeopardizing the ability of current and future generations to harvest and produce (farm, fish, hunt, and forage) food.⁷

HOUSEHOLD FOOD INSECURITY is the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints.⁸

COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY exists when all residents have access to enough good food from a food system that maximizes food sovereignty and justice and can be sustained for generations to come.⁹



Average rate of household food insecurity



Why JustFOOD?

The average rate of **household food insecurity** across Canada's 10 provinces is 15.9%.¹⁰ An estimated 17.7% of households in Nova Scotia are food insecure, whereas an estimated 18.6% of households in HRM are food insecure.¹¹ With rates of household food insecurity higher than both the provincial and national average, HRM requires significant and coordinated effort to strengthen the local food system and increase access to good food.

As HRM continues to grow rapidly, we have a unique opportunity to invest in our food system. A strong regional food system can reduce food insecurity and inequities, support the livelihoods of producers and food workers, support inclusive economic growth, enhance our ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and promote the health and well-being of all residents. Food system solutions must build on the expertise of food system innovators as well as the community wisdom of our farmers and fishers, organizations, residents, and neighbours. Solutions must increase both community and food system resilience. Success will depend on collaboration among government, individuals, businesses, and agencies, each understanding their unique role and contribution to food system change.

To identify and address gaps in our food system, we need a guiding strategy. The *JustFOOD Action Plan* is that strategy. It lays the groundwork for developing a food system that promotes health, sustainability, and economic prosperity. It is driven by collective action and accountability and, above all, it envisions a more equitable food system that reflects both the needs and tremendous strengths of the diverse people who live here.

Food and Municipalities

The power to make policies and actions that impact our food exists across federal, provincial, municipal, and Indigenous governments. Municipalities are uniquely positioned to support our food system as they are responsible for the ways in which communities are designed. They also control many of the crucial services, policies, and infrastructure that impact the local food system. For example, food policy spans many municipal domains, such as transportation, housing, economic development, planning, emergency response, and health promotion. Municipal policies and services can impact food system activities, such as where and how food is produced, sold, and distributed as well as the creation of and value placed on food waste. Many of our public institutions (including local universities, hospitals, libraries, and long-term care facilities) procure, promote, and share knowledge about food. HRM's community centres and libraries, as well as countless community-based organizations, promote food literacy and support residents in accessing healthy and affordable food.

As the level of government with the most direct contact with residents, municipalities also have a responsibility to demonstrate best practices and maximize community assets. Municipalities are increasingly taking a strategic role in building equitable and sustainable food systems, developing policies and programs that address the struggles of fishers and farmers; the inequities that impact people's ability to access food; and the many impacts of the food system on public health, the regional economy, and the environment. Local governments may be limited in their ability to directly impact the low-income status of residents or poverty rates across the region. However, they can prioritize and influence related factors such as affordable housing and local economic development, which can positively impact household income. Municipalities can work with their provincial and federal counterparts to ensure that comprehensive and cross-jurisdictional approaches result in adequate incomes and poverty elimination.



Our Food System

Halifax Regional Municipality

Halifax Regional Municipality is located in K'jipuktuk, the unceded traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq Nation. HRM has a rich cultural fabric and a long history of fishing, farming, and community self-reliance. It is surrounded by the fertile farmlands and fishing grounds of Nova Scotia and is home to unique coastal communities that have farming and fishing embedded in their social and economic fabric. **Food Counts** states that Nova Scotia has an:

Nova Scotia has an “optimal combination of soil, water, climate, and infrastructure to support small-scale agriculture.”¹²

HRM continues to define its place in food system governance within Mi'kma'ki, Nova Scotia, and in Canada. To date, important food system links have been made in municipal plans such as the *Halifax Economic Growth Plan*, the *Integrated Mobility Plan*, and *HalifACT 2050: Acting on Climate Together*, among **other regional-planning documents**. The adoption of food system thinking at the municipal level facilitates collaboration between and among other levels of government, the agri-food industry, institutions, and community organizations. In co-leading the development of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*, HRM has committed to advancing food system goals within the municipal sphere of influence while collaborating with diverse food system actors to champion and take action on system-level change.

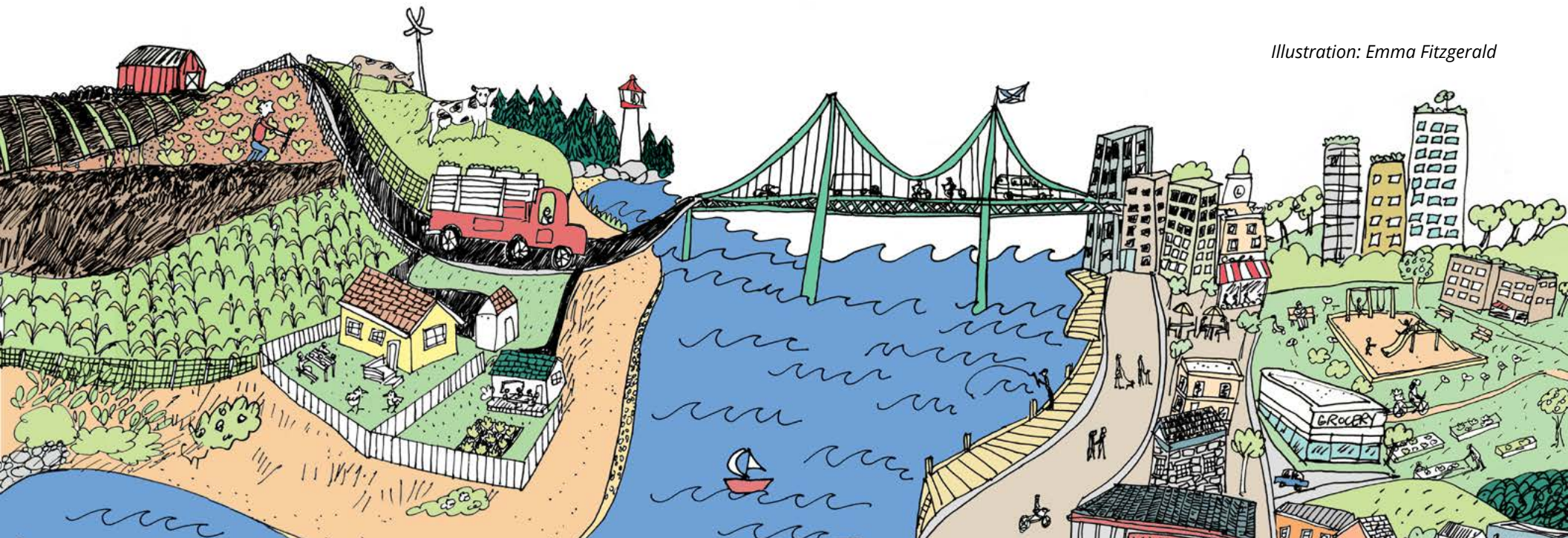


Illustration: Emma Fitzgerald

Food and Equity in HRM



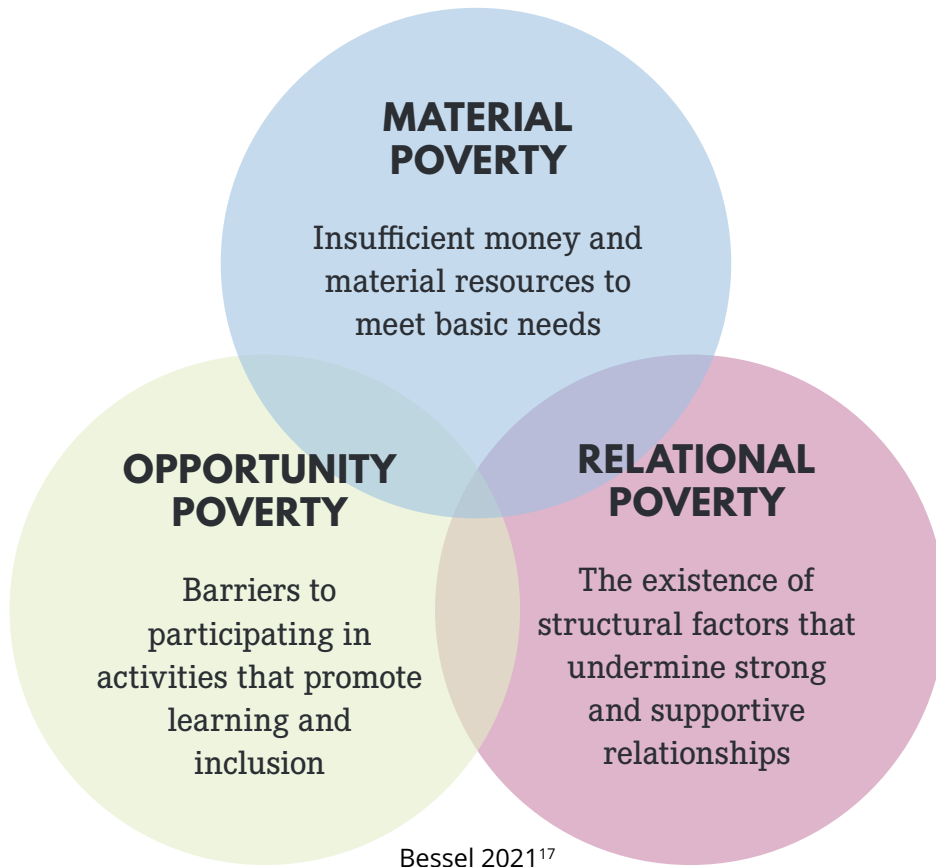
Food access is affected by a variety of factors, including inadequate income, systemic racism and oppression, precarious work and low wages, lack of affordable housing, and lack of affordable childcare. Although work is under way to advance food-security policies and programs, many Nova Scotia residents cannot obtain the food they need.

Income is the strongest predictor of food insecurity. In 2020, the poverty rate in HRM was 8.3% as measured by the share of the population with income below the **Market Basket Measure**. This was the highest rate across benchmark cities.¹³ In 2021, child poverty was 30.8%, varying from 9% to 45.5% based on the community.¹⁴ Children who are visible minorities or newcomers are more likely to live in poverty, reflecting the deep social disparities across our region. Likewise, the highest rates of food insecurity in Canada are found among households where respondents identified as Indigenous or Black. People identifying as white have a lower prevalence of food insecurity than any other group, demonstrating the serious health consequences of Canada's long and ongoing history of colonialism and systemic racism.¹⁵

It is also important to recognize that food insecurity is a serious problem for members of the workforce. Employment does not guarantee household food security; low-wages and precarious employment make it difficult for many to afford the food they need. National reports from the past 10 years have consistently shown that 60-65% of food-insecure households are in the workforce and earn income from employment wages or salaries. As the cost of living rises, low and stagnant wages leave workers unable to afford the food they need. Within Nova Scotia, household types found to be the most vulnerable to food insecurity were lone-parent families – especially single mothers – and unattached individuals living alone.¹⁶

Market Basket Measure refers to the measure of low income based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services representing a modest, basic standard of living developed by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).





Poverty is multidimensional. Due to the strong connections between income and household food insecurity, income-based solutions are critical in order to address the root causes of household food insecurity. ¹⁷

Income is the strongest determinant of household food security

Although financial constraints are the strongest predictor of household food insecurity, the physical accessibility of quality, affordable food also impacts food security. The physical inaccessibility of food is associated with the location of food resources, inadequate public transit, insufficient pedestrian connectivity, and a person or family's inability to own or obtain a vehicle. Rural areas and residential areas with clusters of low-income households are the most susceptible to food inaccessibility.

Within HRM, the following communities have been identified as experiencing the highest rates of poverty: Dartmouth North, Fairview, Spryfield, the Prestons, and the eastern rural communities.¹⁸ On the Halifax Peninsula, poverty rates are highest in areas of the North End, Downtown, and South End with concentrations of low-income or student housing.¹⁹ Enabling access to affordable and healthy foods is essential to public health and to the creation of healthy urban environments. Work is also underway to use recent statistics and methodologies to identify HRM communities at the highest risk for food insecurity, to inform strategy development in Part B as well as priorities for investment and emergency management.

Food Production in HRM



HRM is home to a variety of urban and rural farm-production activities, from cattle ranching to fruit and tree nut farming. In 2021, HRM farmed 11,085 hectares of land (27,932 acres), and represented approximately 3.6% of the agricultural industry in Nova Scotia. The average farm size increased from 191 acres in 2016 to 216 acres in 2021. Although HRM-based farms account for 5% of all farms in Nova Scotia, the number of farms in HRM has decreased from 164 in 2011 to 127 in 2021. Despite the region's rich agricultural history, farmers face a multitude of challenges including rising input costs, low food prices, climate change, and aging populations. With rising operating expenses and stagnant revenue, many farms in Nova Scotia are now earning negative net income.

Community gardening and small-scale urban agriculture continue to grow in the Region. At last count, there were:

- **41 community gardens on non-municipal land,**
- **29 school gardens,**
- **26 community gardens on municipal land, through the Community Gardens Program,**
- **6 urban/heritage farms,**
- **4 community greenhouses,**
- **3 seed libraries, and**
- **1 urban orchard at Leighton Dillman Park (Dartmouth Commons).**

While the COVID-19 pandemic has increased interest in growing food, with record seed sales, it has been challenging for many community based gardening programs. For example, the number of schools with gardens dropped 35% from 2020 to 2022, with 29 currently in operation in contrast to 45 prior to the pandemic.*

Although agriculture is not a dominant industry in HRM, there is great potential to support urban and rural producers and to revitalize local farms.²⁰ Support for producers must address the impacts of climate change on the food system. Already on the frontlines, Maritime farmers have begun to adapt to ongoing seasonal frost changes, midsummer heat waves, and periods of drought. To learn more about the impacts of climate change on food production, visit the “Health, Wellness, and Resilience in HRM” section of this report.

“You don’t need a big field to raise a big turnip.”

- Joseph Howe

* Sourced from the HRCE School Nutritionist October 17, 2022

Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution in HRM



To understand the complex dynamics of regional food systems, it can be helpful to think about a region's foodshed.

A foodshed is the geographic area that supplies a population – in a city, town, or community – with food.

In Nova Scotia, the average distance a food item travels from farm to plate is 3,976 kilometers,²¹ and in 2010, only 13% of money that Nova Scotians spent on food was on food produced in the province. This indicates our heavy reliance on non-local and global food supply chains.²² Although more recent estimates on the amount of money Nova Scotians are spending on local food are not available, the Province aims to increase local consumption to 20% by 2030 through the implementation of the forthcoming *Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy*.²³

In December 2022, HRM had 2,224 licensed food establishments in the region, including restaurants, day care centres, market vendors, food trucks, corner stores, specialty food shops, and grocery stores. This includes 58 market supply outlets (e.g., grocery stores and large everyday product stores like Walmart and Costco) and 269 basic food supply outlets (e.g., corner stores, specialty food shops, and markets).

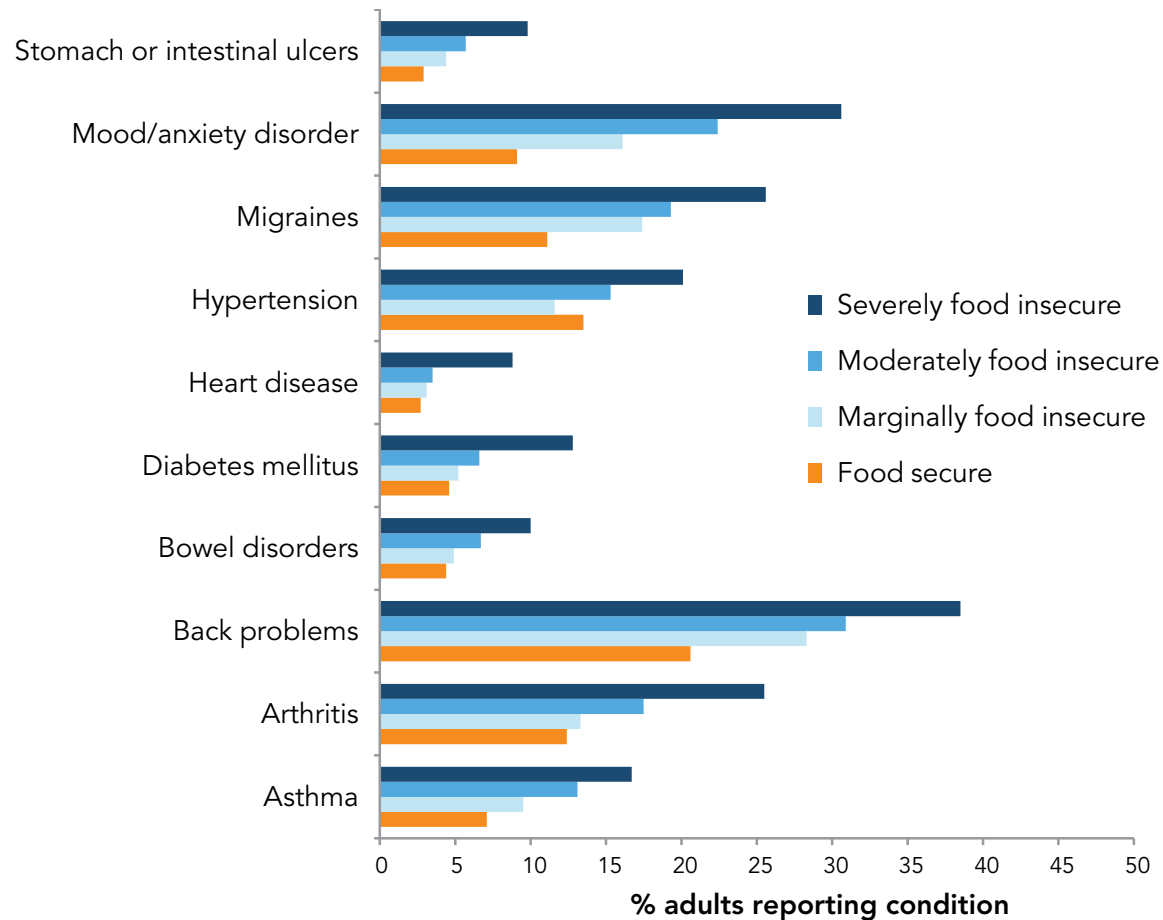
Approximately 69,000 HRM residents (15%) live within 300 meters of a basic food and everyday supply outlet and 51,000 residents (11%) were estimated to live within 500 meters of a market supply outlet.²⁴ With a population of in excess of 460,000, these numbers demonstrate that the majority of HRM residents cannot readily access somewhere to buy groceries and supplies. Physical access could be further complicated by a lack of or costly transportation options, mobility issues, and other factors. Further research is also required on existing food outlets to consider the quality, affordability, suitability, and other features of the food on offer to consider their impact on food access.

Shifts in the grocery industry have also concentrated the number and locations of stores. The increasing consolidation of the agri-food industry and supply chains over time has resulted in the loss of autonomy and power for both local farmers and consumers. For example, it is estimated that just three major players control 78% of grocery sales in Nova Scotia.²⁵ The enormous market power wielded by a handful of companies dramatically reduces competition in agricultural markets as well as prices paid to farmers. However, the Municipality can act to support local producers and food retailers by resisting consolidation and building local food system power.



Food insecurity is a social determinant of health, a non-medical factor that influences health outcomes. What we eat and our access to nutrition impacts our well-being. For example, food insecurity negatively impacts physical, mental, and social health. Healthcare costs among severely food-insecure adults are more than double that of food-secure adults, even after adjusting for well-established social determinants of health.²⁶

Prevalence of chronic conditions among Canadian adults (18-64 years of age), by household food security status²⁶



It is also important to acknowledge that the health and resilience of our food system is largely dependent on the health of our environment. Climate change is an immediate crisis threatening the health and stability of our food system. Likewise, our current food system activities result in greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

As a coastal region, HRM's food system is particularly vulnerable to climate change. Looking ahead, we can expect more extreme weather events and temperatures; the introduction of invasive species and pests; and rising sea levels, leading to crop damage and failure, poor livestock health, and compromised water quality and irrigation. All of these will negatively impact food security and can negatively affect the nutritional quality of our food.

Key food system activities vulnerable to climate change are:

- Production
- Processing
- Distribution
- Preparation
- Consumption

Distribution is especially vulnerable as Atlantic Canada relies on non-local, global food networks, which increases the vulnerability of our food system to issues of produce availability, affordability, and quality control.



In 2019, acting in response to the predicted and already observed impacts of climate change, HRM declared a climate emergency, joining countries and major cities around the world as well as nearly 500 Canadian municipalities. In 2020, Halifax Regional Council unanimously adopted *HalifACT 2050: Acting on Climate Together*. This Plan recognizes that climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts will improve food system resilience and build food security for those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, especially as climate impacts to the food system are not borne equally.

Climate vulnerability varies widely according to sociodemographic factors such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, class, physical environment, and (dis)ability. Indigenous, Black, and racialized communities face disproportionate risks rooted in a national legacy of settler colonialism, white supremacy, and systematic dispossession. Both food justice and climate justice rely on environmental stewardship, land access, and labor practices that equitably redistribute power and build resilience and agency among land defenders, farmers, food chain workers, and consumers.

Emergency Food Planning

There are significant knowledge gaps regarding emergency preparedness and the current capacity of the municipality to be self-sustaining in times of emergency and crisis. For example, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments and community food providers scrambled to assess community needs, identify available food sources and products, and determine what community-based supports were available. Organizations spent considerable time and effort identifying various ways to meet community members' basic food needs. During recent extreme weather events, emergency responders faced considerable difficulty in providing residents with hot meals and access to food. Emergency food responses were challenged by the need to identify communities with the greatest need for support. Responders also faced barriers to identifying service providers and spaces that were available to support the sourcing, storage, preparation, and distribution of food. These difficulties were further compounded by phone and internet outages.

As our climate continues to change, extreme weather events are expected to become more frequent and severe. Multi-day power outages will result in food spoilage, limited ability to prepare food, and the exacerbation of pre-existing food-access issues. In addition to climate change pressures, our food system is extremely vulnerable to disruptions in international supply chains, and until our food system is more localized, the need for emergency food relief is expected to increase. There is a critical need for a strategy to unite efforts to anticipate and prepare for food needs during emergencies and crises. With input from key partners across governments, community organizations, and businesses, a joint strategy will support an efficient and effective emergency food response.





Food and COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated the many gaps in our food system, making clear the extent of food insecurity across the region and the essential roles played by our food producers and food workers.

HRM and the HFGA conducted an online survey to learn about food experiences during the pandemic. Results indicated that during the height of the pandemic, the number of respondents reporting difficulty accessing food or worrying about not having enough food was 10% higher than in pre-pandemic times. A total of 57.6% of respondents reported facing additional challenges accessing food. COVID-19 further demonstrated the need for an emergency food strategy to guide food access during times of crises.

Entering the pandemic's recovery phase, many households continue to struggle to afford food as the cost of food and shelter have significantly increased. With financial constraints being the root cause for household food insecurity, income-based solutions are required.

Food Waste in HRM



Food waste refers to any food discarded or degraded at the point of retail or through consumer use. Food is a precious resource, and it is therefore important to prioritize efforts to avoid and reduce wastage.

Globally, 20 – 30% of food is lost or wasted before reaching the consumer.²⁷ In 2022, the **National Zero Waste Council** found that an estimated 63% of the food thrown away in Canadian households could have been eaten. Each Canadian household wastes roughly 140 kg of food annually.²⁸ HRM currently diverts approximately 53,000 tonnes of organic waste from landfill disposal each year through composting.

In fact, HRM was one of the first municipalities in Canada to develop and implement a green cart program in the late 1990s. In 2017, HRM approved the Organics Management Strategy, which recommended the development of a new processing facility to replace two aging facilities. This 60,000 tonne per year facility is planned to be commissioned in 2024 and will incorporate advanced screening equipment to ensure contamination such as plastic, glass, and foils are effectively removed from the produced compost. The compost produced at the new facility will meet the 2010 NS Environment Composting Facility Guidelines. It is anticipated that one of the key markets for this compost will be the Nova Scotian agricultural community.

Preventing food waste is critical to fostering a circular economy, or an “economic model that aims to avoid waste and to preserve the value of resources (raw materials, energy and water) for as long as possible. Products and materials are continuously (re) circulated – as opposed to a linear model in which they are discarded as waste after use.” In a circular economy, “waste” becomes a valuable resource and is used to regenerate our natural systems. A circular economy approach to preventing or otherwise addressing food waste at the municipal level will require ongoing policy reform and program development.



Development of the JustFOOD Action Plan

The development of Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* is the outcome of nearly a decade of work. A timeline highlighting each milestone achieved can be found in the “Executive Summary.”

Halifax Food Policy Alliance

Formed in 2013, the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA) is a multi-sectoral partnership of individuals and organizations working towards a common vision of a Halifax: **where no one is hungry and everyone has nutritious food that they enjoy, for generations to come, sustained by local producers.** Connected to a network of over 700 supporters from across the food system and 2,200 social media followers, the HFPA is currently co-chaired by HRM and the Ecology Action Centre. It encompasses members such as Nova Scotia Health Public Health, Feed Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Health Community Health Boards - Central Zone, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University, and Halifax Public Libraries.

The HFPA has been the driving force behind the development of an HRM food strategy and has built the rationale and capacity for the JustFOOD Plan through three areas of influence:

- 1. SUPPORTING HEALTHY CHANGE:** influencing policy and coordinating action to bring healthy food to everyone
- 2. LEADING INFORMED ACTION:** using evidence and insights from those with lived experience to inform action
- 3. CONVENING COMMUNITY:** connecting with others to have important conversations and to mobilize food-focused action and advocacy





Food Counts

In 2014, the HFGA released **Food Counts: Halifax Food Assessment**, a point-in-time assessment of the HRM's food system. Food Counts uses qualitative and quantitative data to answer two questions: (1) what is the current state of our food system? and (2) how does our food system measure up in key criteria for community food security? The report identified many strengths, such as HRM's longstanding history of fishing and farming, robust public interest in urban food production, and the growing enthusiasm for local food consumption. However, several areas of improvement were also identified. Findings indicated high rates of household food insecurity, an apparent loss of community-based food-related knowledge and skills, and high chronic disease rates. Farmers and fishers were also identified as struggling to make an adequate living. These findings, among others, catalyzed the development of a food strategy and laid the foundations for many of the recommendations in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.

HRM Food Charter

In 2017, the HFGA released the **HRM Food Charter**, which presents a vision for a food system that will strengthen the health of our people, our communities, and our ecosystems. It is both a declaration and a call to action for a coordinated effort to revitalize and strengthen a locally based, sustainable food system for HRM. The *HRM Food Charter* was endorsed by Halifax Regional Council in December 2019 and outlines five principles to guide the work of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.

Following the adoption of the *HRM Food Charter*, HRM and the HFGA focused on building support for the creation of a municipal food strategy. The five *HRM Food Charter* principles provided structure for gathering community feedback and developing early draft recommendations and actions. These five principles align closely with those of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), an international agreement on urban food policies, and as such, HRM and the HFGA made the decision to organize the *JustFOOD Action Plan* according to the MUFPP.

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact



Municipalities are increasingly seen as leaders on food system issues, with both the obligation and ability to advance progress around regional, national, and international commitments and goals. In 2014, the Mayor of Milan launched an international protocol aimed at tackling food-related issues at the urban level recognizing that cities are where governments are closest to residents, local issues, and corresponding opportunities. To date, the MUFPP has been signed by more than 240 cities. It is both a declaration and a concrete working tool with a framework for action that lists 37 recommendations and 44 indicators to monitor progress.

The recommendations are grouped using six pillars: (1) governance; (2) sustainable diets and nutrition; (3) social and economic equity; (4) food production; (5) food supply and distribution; and (6) food waste.

The MUFPP identifies impact areas and frameworks that can be adapted to local contexts. The associated tools are designed to help cities, big and small, align with a global network of practitioners and policy-makers who are at the forefront of urban food system transformation. The six MUFPP pillars have been used to shape the framework of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*. As a result, the Plan will build off the wisdom and rigour of the MUFPP to identify areas of impact and align progress indicators with national and international movements.



THE MILAN URBAN FOOD POLICY PACT

MONITORING FRAMEWORK

A practical handbook for implementation



Plan Structure and Action Areas

The *JustFOOD Action Plan* will enable communities, government, and other key actors to take collaborative and coordinated action on food system issues, advancing food system transformation. The *JustFOOD Action Plan* assigns a set of recommendations to each of the six structural principles. The aims of each principle are outlined here.



Governance recommendations aim to facilitate collaboration across and among government agencies and departments; align policies and programs that impact the food system, establish knowledge-sharing mechanisms; and develop strategies to monitor progress. These recommendations may require the Municipality to act directly, support partners, or advocate for change.



Social and Economic Equity recommendations help increase community-level food sovereignty. We must ensure that everyone is able to produce, prepare, and access food safely and with dignity by equipping communities with food system knowledge, skills, and expertise; developing food policies and programs that address and improve social inclusion; and tackling the roots of food insecurity and injustice.

African Nova Scotian Food Justice and Sovereignty

recommendations aim to celebrate the unique and vibrant food culture of the African Nova Scotian community, support strong traditions of homesteading and agriculture, and advance African Nova Scotian and Black food sovereignty.

Indigenous Food Justice and Sovereignty

recommendations aim to enable and support Indigenous Peoples in their right to access healthy and culturally preferred foods and exercise autonomy over where and how their food is produced, harvested, hunted, and fished.



Food Production recommendations aim to support producer livelihoods and strengthen sustainable food production by providing resources and services to urban and rural food producers, developing the infrastructure needed to support a local food system, enabling secure access to land for sustainable food production, and otherwise supporting short food chains.



Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution

recommendations aim to ensure a sustainable, fair, reliable, and efficient supply and distribution of food into, out of, and within the municipality.



Health, Wellness, and Resilience recommendations aim to promote and support access to nutritious food and create the conditions for healthy food environments while promoting sustainable diets. These recommendations also strengthen ecological resilience through improved air, water, and soil quality, and increased biodiversity.



Food Waste recommendations aim to support the municipality to sustainably manage and reduce food waste by recovering and redistributing food, raising awareness of food loss and waste, and enabling effective composting.

Although these recommendations exemplify many of the ways that we can work towards food system transformation, the Plan is not exhaustive. Much of the transformative work that the Plan hopes to progress will depend on building collective capacity and increasing our ability to tackle the root causes of food insecurity. The necessity of building collective capacity has been worked into each step of the implementation.

Summary of Engagement

JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART A - FEBRUARY 2023

HALIFAX





Summary of Engagement

Engagement Overview

A detailed summary of engagement design and results can be found in Appendix 2.

Building on the *HRM Food Charter*, initial engagements focused on refining the *HRM Food Charter* principles and vision to create and test the JustFOOD Framework (see Appendix 3), laying the foundations for working together toward action. Engagements then shifted to identifying what the community members and partners wanted the *JustFOOD Action Plan* to achieve, then to testing proposed recommendations to make sure they reflected this feedback. Part A recommendations were created with extensive input from community members and food system partners. Consultations for Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* began in March 2021 with the majority of engagements wrapping up in August 2022. During this time, HRM and the HFPA engaged with:

- **29 community-based organizations**
- **6 provincial partners**
- **9 HRM business units**
- **Thousands of HRM residents**

Engagement Priorities

HRM and the HFPA worked directly with the public to ensure that community concerns and aspirations were consistently understood, considered, and directly reflected in the Plan's recommendations. Public engagement was intended to (1) profile the local food system; (2) identify measurable goals, priorities, and recommendations for the *JustFOOD Action Plan*; (3) strengthen relationships and readiness for action among key local partners; and (4) motivate community members to take part in food system changes.

Knowledge and expertise lie within the communities that experience disproportionate rates of food insecurity. Engagement opportunities were designed to create space for these communities to shape Plan development, implementation, and outcomes. These opportunities were delivered in collaboration with trusted community partners and were designed to enable full and equitable participation. Participants were compensated for their time and expertise.

Engagement Design

Engagement for Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* was divided into two phases.

During Phase One of engagement, HRM and the HFPA solicited community and partner participation to create foundations for the Plan, identifying the key principles, goals, and strategies necessary to develop effective actions for positive food system change across communities and experiences. During Phase Two, HRM and the HFPA collected community and partner feedback on the recommendations generated during and following the first phase of engagement. This feedback was used to identify gaps, explore emerging opportunities, and revise proposed actions. HRM and the HFPA worked with community advisors during this review process.

As this work occurred during the pandemic, engagements were designed to prioritize public health and safety while providing space for lively dialogue. Virtual participation was encouraged when possible, and at-home participation opportunities were made available.

Building Awareness

Beginning in 2016, as a stepping stone to the development of a regional food strategy, HRM and the HFPA implemented an extensive engagement process for the development of the *HRM Food Charter*. Throughout this process, HRM and the HFPA built food system awareness, capacity, and excitement for the development of a food strategy based on community-led action and advocacy. Over 200 residents and 30 municipal staff and councillors participated in charter-based engagements. In December 2019, Halifax Regional Council endorsed the *HRM Food Charter* and the development of a food strategy for HRM.

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated the many gaps in our food system, making clear the extent of food insecurity across the region and the essential roles played by our food producers and food workers. Throughout 2020 and 2021, HRM provided food supports to more than 2,000 households, offering resources such as food hampers, food-activity kits, and food-production supplies. These outreach efforts supported community-level access to food, captured food experiences during the pandemic, and introduced residents to the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.



Photo: Snickerdoodle Photography

Phase One Engagement

Phase One of engagement began in March 2021 with the launch of the Food System Workshops series. This series of virtual workshops was designed to introduce the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, establish the foundations, and set Plan priorities. Following these workshops, the **JustFOOD website** and social media channels were launched to showcase the Plan's development and encourage participation. The *JustFOOD Engagement Toolkit* was created to support community partners to lead Civic Dinners and Hosted Engagements. The toolkit also functioned as a report-back tool to receive feedback on Plan goals.

During the latter half of Phase One, HRM and the HFPa offered residents and food system actors a variety of ways to be involved, recognizing diverse learners, abilities, and backgrounds. Community members were invited to shape the Plan by (1) participating in or hosting a **Civic Dinner**; (2) providing feedback through the JustFOOD Action Survey; and (3) participating in a Targeted Engagement. The JustFOOD Action Survey was distributed in hard copies and offered online. It was used to organize and compile feedback from all engagements. As part of Targeted Engagement efforts, HRM and the HFPa also organized dozens of meetings with community organizations, government officials, and other key food system actors. Phase One of engagement ended in March 2022 with the closure of the JustFOOD Action Survey.



Civic Dinner kits contained ingredients to make a pot of soup and a batch of granola bars for 6 to 8 people. Kits included a discussion guide to prompt conversations about food justice and how we can effect positive change within the HRM food system.

Phase Two Engagement

During Phase Two (March 2022 to August 2022), community members, Plan partners, and key food system actors were invited to give their feedback on Part A of the Plan. This feedback was used to refine and expand proposed recommendations. In an effort to ensure a fully comprehensive review of Part A, three distinct, community-led Advisory Groups – **an Indigenous Advisory, African Nova Scotian Advisory, and Disability Community Advisory** – were established to address gaps and to create new, community-specific actions where necessary. All advisory members were compensated. HRM and the HFPa also collected feedback from provincial and municipal subject matter experts.

Engagement Themes

Community members, partners, and key food system actors expressed a desire for a socially equitable food system where all community members are able to access nutritious and local food with dignity, and where food workers are valued and receive systemic government and consumer support.

Many participants identified the need for a food system that actively resists colonialism and white supremacy, and for a food system approach in which Black, Indigenous, and racialized leadership is prioritized.

Engagement participants also identified income as a root cause of food insecurity and recommended that a greater number of food-related social services be provided to low-income community members. They highlighted the need for a greater number of reduced-barrier food production and preparation spaces and tools, such as free food-skills workshops and improved access to growing spaces such as community gardens. Participants also recommended that the public sector address food system inequities through integrated land-use planning, transportation planning, and community design.

Generally, participants expressed a strong desire to see food at the hearts of our communities and identified food as a valuable tool that can bring people together. Many participants, particularly producers and other food system workers, expressed strong support for local food consumption and production, identifying small-scale, local food producers and retailers as key actors in the regional economy. They championed for communities to define their own food systems, where the means and ends of food production are accessible to all. Similarly, many voiced a need for infrastructure that builds local production, processing, and distribution power.

In summary, community members and partners highlighted the need for a comprehensive food strategy that acts to create a more equitable food system, addresses the root causes of food insecurity, localizes the food system, disrupts colonialism and systemic racism, and builds community capacity and food system resilience.

Recommendations

JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART A - FEBRUARY 2023

HALIFAX





Recommendations

The recommendations made in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* reflect extensive community and partner feedback, best practices from other regions, and learnings gathered through work done by HRM and the HFPA. This section identifies Plan principles and recommendations for HRM, which will require collective action and shared responsibility. The proposed Food Policy Council and Working Groups will coordinate collective action and develop strategies to enhance the efforts of community partners. However, HRM and the HFPA recognize that a Food Policy Council cannot tackle every recommendation made in the Plan.

Recommendations are organized according to the six *JustFOOD Action Plan* principles: (1) Governance; (2) Social and Economic Equity; (3) Food Production; (4) Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution; (5) Health, Wellness, and Resilience; and (6) Food Waste. The recommendations are designed to enable community, government, and other partners to take collaborative and coordinated action on food system issues advancing food system transformation.



Governance



Social and Economic Equity



Food Production



Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution



Health, Wellness, and Resilience



Food Waste

Symbol Legend for Recommendations:



Year 1

Recommendations with this icon are priority actions to be progressed during year one of plan implementation.



In Progress

Recommendations with this icon are underway. Action is being taken by the HFPA, or community partners.



Governance

ensuring an enabling environment for effective action

Food governance includes (1) the formal and informal customs, practices, and assumptions that determine how we make decisions about our food system (e.g., intergovernmental partnerships or food policy councils) and (2) the outputs or products of these decision-making practices (e.g., policies, laws, and regulations). The ways we work together to design our cities, develop policies, and engage communities all impact our food system. Stronger connections between and among levels and orders of government (federal, provincial, local, and Indigenous), the agri-food sector, institutions, and community organizations as well as the active engagement of individuals will focus and enhance our collective impact.

The recommendations in this section are designed to enable relationship building and adaptation over time as HRM defines its place in food system governance within Mi'kma'ki, Nova Scotia, and Canada. As such, these recommendations aim to facilitate collaboration across and among government systems, agencies, and departments; align policies and programs that impact the food system; establish knowledge-sharing mechanisms; and develop strategies to monitor our progress. These recommendations require the Municipality to act directly, support partners, and advocate for change.



- Y1 1. Establish and fund a Food Policy Council** to coordinate collective action for positive change; support regional food initiatives; provide advice to governments, institutions, and others, and guide and evaluate the implementation of the *JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan*.
- a. Develop a governance structure that best supports the Council in delivering an effective mandate, including terms of reference and responsibilities, reporting structures, staffing, and other administrative needs.
 - b. Resource the Council through secure funding from government and other sources, in-kind support, and other contributions to ensure an adequate budget for the implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.
 - i. Develop a sustainable funding stream operated by the Council to provide financial support for community-based initiatives that address community food access and the health of the local food system.
 - c. Centre racial equity and increase community power in food governance and ensure that the Council reflects diverse perspectives and provides opportunities for communities to lead and influence food action and system change in our food system towards increased food justice and food sovereignty.

- Y1 2. Support the development of an Indigenous Food Governance Body and an African Nova Scotian Food Policy Council** that operate autonomously from but in collaboration with the Food Policy Council.
- a. Support the development of an African Nova Scotian Food Sovereignty plan.

Partners at the Dalhousie Schulich School of Law have explored options for a **Food Policy Council** in their report (**Appendix 1): Governance Structures for the Regional Food System in HRM**. The report makes recommendations based on 7 criteria for collaborative food governance:

- Comprehensive Sectoral Representation
- Community Diversity and Inclusivity
- Equalization of Power
- External Relationships
- Public Participation and Transparency
- Opportunities for Adequate Resourcing
- Adaptive Capacity

IP 3. Continue creating an enabling municipal environment for good food.

- a. Facilitate collaboration across municipal departments and adopt a food system lens and equity-based approach for municipal decisions.
 - i. Ensure appropriate allocation of municipal resources for the adoption of a food system lens and creation of tools to support this.
 - ii. Consider new policies, practices, and infrastructure projects through the food system lens.
 - iii. Use the food system lens to review and update existing municipal plans and policies to further the objectives of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.
- b. Investigate and create municipal incentives that support increased access to healthy food and a more sustainable local food system under current authority while exploring opportunities for additional incentives as changes are being considered to relevant legislation.
- c. Continue to review and amend regional-planning documents and other long-range plans based on emergent food system issues and opportunities.
 - i. Include progress measurement of policies aiming to increase access to food and strengthen the local food system in future regional-planning documents and other long-range plan reviews.

IP 4. Continue to advocate for collaboration across municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government and with Indigenous nations to advance conversations and actions that build a resilient and equitable regional food system where healthy food is accessible for all.

- a. Engage, support, and share learnings with other Nova Scotia municipalities to establish a more just, sustainable, and equitable food system.
- b. Seek to align with the forthcoming *Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy*.

Y1 5. Create a virtual community food hub through the JustFOOD website.

- a. Establish a central repository of resources that supports community food planning, provides local context on community food security, and promotes dignified food access.
- b. Share and promote community food services (e.g., food banks), including those that are open beyond traditional working hours.
- c. Share events, workshops, and trainings related to food in the region through a public calendar that allows community members to input their own events.

- IP 6. Develop Food4ALL, an interactive mapping resource** to enable the identification, refinement, and sharing of information about regional food resources, including agricultural land, food outlets, licensed community kitchens, food services, and food advocates.
- a. Build on existing data to create a comprehensive, current database of regional food resources.
- 7. Develop a multi-sectoral online food-research hub** to enhance the availability and exchange of data related to urban food systems, including data collected by academics and institutions as well as data generated by civil society and other partners.
- a. Commit to hosting or facilitating a regular food system forum to share knowledge on creating a more resilient and equitable regional food system.

- IP 8. Pursue membership in the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP)** and other formal food networks to share knowledge and improve food governance.
- Y1 9. Implement and monitor the *JustFOOD Action Plan* in collaboration with universities and other research institutions.**
- a. Publish an annual review of a selection of recommendation indicators.
 - b. Provide regular updates on implementation progress, including an annual update to Halifax Regional Council and a comprehensive five-year review, responding to emerging issues and adjusting actions as needed.
 - c. Use the virtual food hub to share Plan progress, identify emerging issues, and adapt recommendations based on research and ongoing discussion.
 - d. Use the key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate Plan progress.

Social and Economic Equity

Food access is directly related to income, the affordability of food, the accessibility and type of local food outlets, access to resources to produce food, and the availability of a sustainably produced food supply. Food justice treats food as a human right and seeks to ensure that the benefits and risks of our food system are shared equitably among us all.

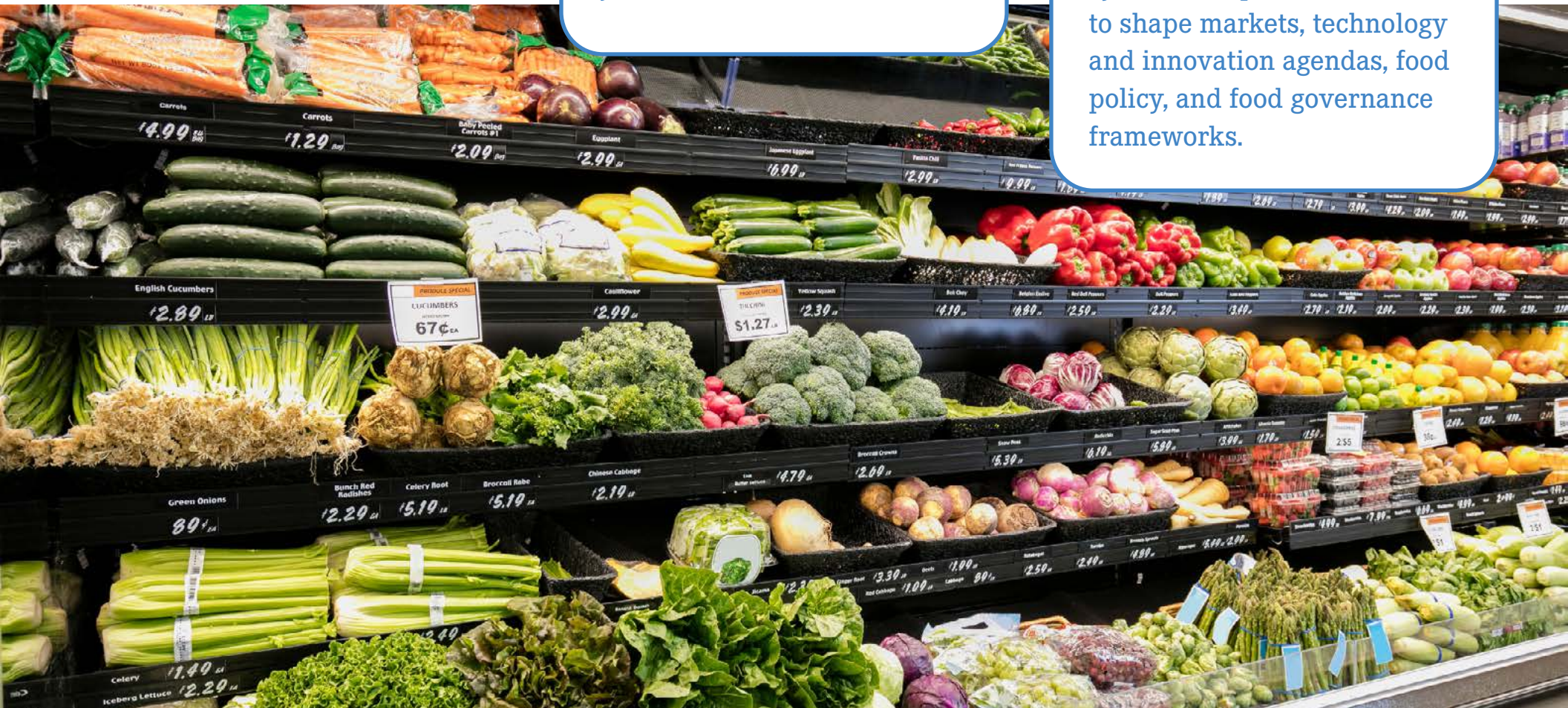
These recommendations aim to increase community-level food sovereignty, recognizing that meaningful change requires that we shift away from charitable models in favour of those that build community capacity and reduce our reliance on a **globalized**, **industrialized**, and **corporatized** food system. We must ensure that everyone is able to produce, prepare, and access food safely and with dignity by equipping communities with food system knowledge, skills, and expertise; developing food policies and programs that address and improve social inclusion; and tackling the roots of food insecurity and injustice. Food work that directly addresses racial inequities, systems of oppression and privilege, and the distribution of resources and power contributes to stronger programming and more just outcomes for all.



A **globalized food system** is a food system that relies on global supply chains to meet the basic food-related needs of residents, producers, and food system workers.

An **industrialized food system** is a food system characterized by the mass production of standardized food items, driven by motives of profit and efficiency, often at the cost of human health, the environment, and social justice.

A **corporatized food system** is a food system in which a relatively small number of large companies have come to wield an inordinate amount of power and exert influence over food activities from farm to fork. In corporatized food systems, corporations are able to shape markets, technology and innovation agendas, food policy, and food governance frameworks.



10. Promote income-based solutions. Income is the key determinant of household food insecurity, and income-based solutions are required to address the root causes of food insecurity.

- a. Work across sectors and governments to promote a guaranteed basic income, living wages, income assistance reform, and strong social policies that allow all people to have adequate, liveable incomes and cope with rising costs of living, including the cost of food. Critical provincial policy levers include:
 - i. Increasing the minimum wage to a living wage to enable low-income individuals to cope with the increasing costs of living, including food.
 - ii. Increasing the income assistance rate to match the official poverty line or Market Basket Measure.
 - iii. Increasing provincial child-benefit programs.
 - iv. Incorporating indexation into provincial social assistance and other provincial income supports to account for inflation.



Photo: Ben Lemphers

11. Develop programs and resources that address the rising cost of food in collaboration with the Province, academic institutions, and other partners.

- a. Support a low-barrier emergency food benefit, distributed through trusted community partners, that will allow households facing urgent food scarcity to access foods of their choice in a dignified manner.
- b. Develop programs and resources (e.g., bulk delivery services) to assist community members in coping with the rising cost of food.
- c. Explore ways to reduce the cost and enhance availability of sustainably produced local food.

12. Promote fair and decent employment for all, including fair economic relations, fair wages, and improved labour conditions within the food and agriculture sector.*

- a. Advocate at the provincial level for (1) 10 paid sick days for all workers; (2) guaranteed holiday and overtime pay for all farm workers; and (3) immediate access to provincial health insurance upon arrival to Nova Scotia, regardless of the length of the work permit, for all workers in the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program.
- b. Advocate at the provincial and federal levels to establish new and ease existing pathways for migrant workers in the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program and Temporary Foreign Worker Program to achieve permanent residency.
- c. Collaborate with No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, Farm Safety Nova Scotia, the Province, and community organizations to improve occupational work and safety conditions for migrant workers in agriculture.
 - i. Collaborate with No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Health to deliver workshops on occupational work and safety hazards (e.g., heat stroke and lyme disease).
 - ii. Develop a funding stream to provide migrant workers with access to appropriate work gear (e.g., work shirts, hats, sunglasses, and water bottles).
 - iii. Work with community partners to create and provide mental health resources to migrant workers.

*** Recommendations relevant to migrant workers were developed in collaboration with No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia and are based on public engagement and consultation with migrant agricultural workers in Nova Scotia.**



On July 15, 2022, members of No One Is Illegal – Nova Scotia deliver emergency food boxes to Caribbean and Latin American migrant workers in the Annapolis Valley.

Photo: Stacey Gomez

- d. Collaborate with community organizations to increase farm workers' access to good and culturally preferred food.
 - i. Work with partners to provide farm workers with regular, scheduled access to fresh, low-cost, culturally preferred food either at farms or in central shopping areas.
 - ii. Explore avenues to provide farm workers with opportunities and resources to grow food at home or in community spaces.
 - iii. Pursue opportunities to fund the No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia Food-Box Program.

- e. Collaborate with libraries, schools, community centres, and faith based-organizations to provide easily accessible social services (e.g., literacy services, legal services, resource fairs) to migrant workers in agriculture.
 - i. Develop multiple-language information packages to share with workers upon their arrival in Nova Scotia that detail existing public services and how to access them.
- f. Collaborate with community centres and faith-based organizations to organize leisure activities (e.g., regional sports tournaments) or outings for migrant workers in agriculture.
 - i. Provide migrant workers with low-cost or free access to municipal recreational centres.
- g. Collaborate with the Municipality, the Province, and community organizations to develop relief supports (e.g., an emergency-subsidy funding stream) for farm workers in crisis.
- h. Work with the Municipality, the Province, and other relevant actors to increase farm workers' ability to travel freely via public transit and active transportation.
 - i. Advocate for a reduced-cost or subsidized travel program through **Rural Transportation Association: Rural Rides**.

13. Foster food-related social enterprises that support sustainable livelihoods for equity-seeking populations and facilitate access to safe and healthy food in both urban and rural areas.

Photo: Stacey Gomez

Migrant workers and Nova Scotians gathered for a community brunch in Kentville. The event was a collaboration between the Valley Community Learning Association, the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth Immigrant Services, the Town of Kentville, and No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia.



14. Support community-based programs and grassroots initiatives that provide dignified access to good food, create social inclusion, and offer choices that respect the culture and traditions of diverse communities.

- a. Increase ongoing support to the Halifax **Mobile Food Market** and other food-delivery programs to expand their reach and bring affordable, quality food to communities with limited access to healthy and culturally preferred food.
- b. Support groups to establish community food pantries and fridges where all members of the community can take and donate food with dignity.
- c. Pilot a **social supermarket** in collaboration with the Province and/or other partners.

Social supermarkets can take a variety of forms. Some are membership-based food retail outlets targeted to lower income households, where members can shop for affordable, healthier food and household items. Other models are not membership based but operate on a pay-what-you-can basis.

The **Mobile Food Market** brings healthy, affordable, high quality foods to Halifax neighbourhoods with limited access. Markets operate year-round and take place every two weeks.

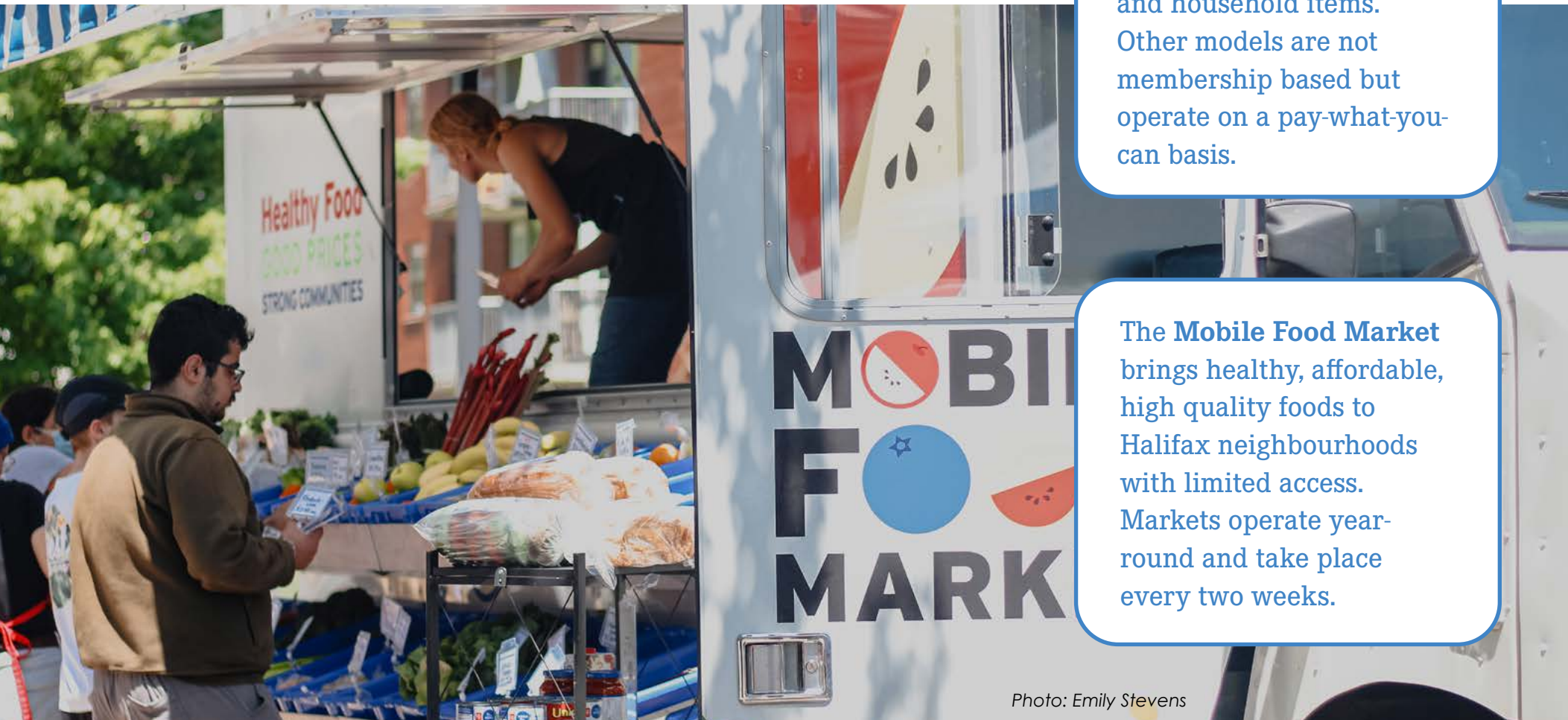


Photo: Emily Stevens

- d. Support the development of new community food centres, like The North Grove in Dartmouth, as places that build community through the sharing of food and knowledge.
- e. Support the development and renewal of new and existing community kitchens.
 - i. Inventory existing community kitchens and the stipulations for their use; analyze current opportunities and challenges facing community kitchens.
 - ii. Encourage installation of community kitchens or retrofit existing kitchens in new developments, social housing sites, and municipal facilities.

The North Grove is a community hub where people come together to grow, cook, share and advocate for good food and a healthy and fair food system.



Photo: Snickerdoodle Photography

IP 15. Promote participatory education, training and research as key elements in strengthening local action to promote rights-based approaches to food security and to increase social and economic equity.

- a. Support municipal facilities such as the Halifax Public Libraries as well as other community service providers to offer food literacy programming.
- b. Work with existing seniors clubs and centers to create opportunities for knowledge sharing, through storytelling and oral history, as a way to foster intergenerational and multicultural learning around food production, preparation, storage, and preservation.
- c. Create opportunities for youth, including post-secondary students, to gain knowledge of food and build healthy relationship with foods.
- d. Work with post-secondary institutions to provide food programming to students or to support organizations who provide such programming in a post-secondary education setting.

The Halifax Public Libraries know that food brings people together, and so do free and welcoming public spaces like our libraries. Resources come in all shapes, sizes—and yes, even tastes. The **Halifax Public Libraries** are proud to offer free snacks, workshops, resources, and tools for local food lovers and changemakers, year-round.



16. Improve the geographic and physical accessibility of food.

- a. When reviewing and revising municipal planning documents, create incentives to increase community-level access to good food and strengthen the local food system.
 - i. Require larger multi-unit and mixed-use buildings to provide space for food production as part of amenity spaces, and require a portion of the landscaping to be edible.
 - ii. Create an application checklist for development applicants. This checklist should detail ways for developers to incorporate food-related supports (e.g., growing space) into new multi-unit buildings.
 - iii. Require large land holdings and master-planning applications to address impacts on the food system and access to food as part of land suitability assessments and neighbourhood design.
 - iv. Support policy-makers and community partners in using the **Community Food Assessment Toolkit** to increase the accessibility of food when working on larger-scale community visioning, developments, and municipal infrastructure projects.
 - v. Increase opportunities for food uses (production, processing, on-land fish farms, and food retail such as farm-gate sales) and consideration of the impact on the food system in significant land-use bylaw and municipal-planning strategy updates.
- b. Advocate for the elimination of restrictive covenants that restrict food uses through long-term conditions placed on a property's deed at the time of sale.
 - i. Support legislation such as the **Provincial Bill No 55** to amend Chapter 385 of the Revised Statutes of 1989 The Real Property Act to prevent the creation of new and void existing restrictive covenants that restrict access to food and medicine.
- c. Use transportation planning to help improve food accessibility in underserved communities by improving transit services and active transportation routes to important food destinations.
 - i. Evaluate food-resource mapping (supermarkets, farmers' markets, and other food outlets) with transit and active transportation data to identify barriers to and opportunities for accessing food resources.
 - ii. Work with transit planners to better support the geographic accessibility of food.
 - iii. Explore central food-pick-up models for satellite communities, made accessible by regular shuttles to and from central pick-up sites.

Y1 17. Use municipal facilities and assets to offer food programs, grow food, showcase best practices, and support publicly accessible food infrastructure. This includes initiatives like community fridges, pantries, and kitchens.

18. Partner with post-secondary institutions to improve food access, choice, and affordability for students, recognizing the high rate of food insecurity among post-secondary students.

- a. Work with partners to increase the transparency of exclusive contracts between universities and food-service companies.
- b. Work with partners to decentralize food services on campus and allow small food businesses to operate on campus.
- c. Examine the barriers to food access on campus and support programs that advance student food security.
 - i. Work with partners to provide shared equipment on campus in order to facilitate students storing and heating their food.
 - ii. Provide sustainable support to on-campus food-security initiatives and programs that increase student food access, such as student-run farmers' markets and community kitchens.
 - iii. Work with partners to increase community kitchen or kitchenette access to students who live in residence buildings that do not have cooking spaces or utilities.
 - iv. Support programs that encourage and enable youth to foster healthy relationships with food.

19. Support the design and implementation of inclusive social protection and food assistance programs for seniors.

Ensure complementarity across wider social-protection programs and links with nutrition and health services.

- a. Raise awareness among seniors and their families about existing food security and nutrition programs and services.



The Loaded Ladle provides accessible, sustainable, locally-sourced free food on the Dalhousie University campus. They also offer community programs that critically examine barriers to food sovereignty, food security, and food justice.

20. Promote food security in the disability community,*

recognizing that persons with disabilities experience disproportionate barriers to accessing nutritious food and participating in food production.

- a. Advocate for reform to the provincial Disability Support Program with special attention to increasing the number of hours allocated to personal support workers, giving workers adequate time to prepare and cook nutritious meals for clients.
- b. Work with lived-experience advisors to develop and adopt standards to increase the accessibility of existing and proposed municipal food services and programs, including that of farmers' markets and urban farms located on municipal property.
- c. Design and implement inclusive social-protection and food-assistance programs for community members with disabilities, and ensure complementarity across wider social-protection programs and links with nutrition and health services.
 - i. Raise awareness among persons with disabilities and their families about existing food-security and nutrition programs and services as well as eligibility criteria.
- d. Support the development of strategies for food distribution and delivery to persons with limited mobility.
 - i. Secure funding for the development of a free or subsidized food-preparation and delivery program for residents with mobility barriers or health concerns (e.g., seniors, persons with disabilities, persons with autoimmune conditions).

- e. Promote the role of persons with disabilities in sustainable food production.
 - i. Develop programs and funding streams to empower persons with disabilities to engage in agriculture, enabling access to resources such as land, advisory services, and food-production technologies.
- f. Carry out awareness-raising and training among governments, organizations, and institutions to ensure access to food and nutrition for persons with disabilities in partnership with organizations such as reachAbility and Inclusion Nova Scotia.
 - i. Develop training programs to address the requirements of persons with disabilities concerning food and nutrition directed to (1) policy-makers, (2) the staff and volunteers of food-assistance and -distribution (or related) programs, (3) the private sector working in the food system and industry, (4) health-care professionals, including nutrition workers, (5) and those working in institutions such as schools, prisons, and residential institutions.

*** A Disability Community Advisory Group was organized to draft this set of recommendations in collaboration with the HRM and the HFPA. These recommendations are also informed by public engagement with members of the disability community as well as targeted engagement supported by reachAbility. Advisors and community members were compensated for their time and knowledge.**

21. Celebrate food's role in bringing people together and bridging cultures and experiences.

- a. Develop a food-event program that reduces barriers, celebrates, supports, and promotes food-focused community events.
 - i. Work with HRM Civic Events and licensing bodies to explore avenues to reduce costs and regulatory barriers associated with hosting food-focused community events.
- b. Expand the number of events celebrating local producers.
- c. Support programming opportunities for newcomers to share knowledge and skills with other newcomers and long-time residents alike.
- d. Support Halifax Public Libraries and other municipal facilities in offering culturally diverse food programming.
- e. Work with the Province and other partners to celebrate where our food comes from by promoting farm literacy and facilitating conversations between farmers and the public.



Indigenous Food Justice and Sovereignty

Indigenous food sovereignty enables and supports Indigenous Peoples in their right to (1) access healthy and culturally preferred foods and (2) exercise autonomy over where and how their food is produced, harvested, hunted, and fished. Indigenous food sovereignty necessitates the right to self-determination of Indigenous food systems, including the ability to access traditional food as well as to operate sustainably apart from or outside of an industrialized food system.

Canada's history of colonialism and marginalization of Indigenous Peoples includes the use of food as a tool of oppression, the destruction of traditional food systems, and the creation of policies that limit Indigenous people's ability to hunt, fish, grow, and gather. Indigenous food justice works to address these social and environmental injustices, providing a restorative framework to strengthen Indigenous food systems. Through Indigenous food justice, food can be a catalyst for healing, reconciliation, and cultural resurgence.

An Indigenous Advisory Group was organized to draft this set of recommendations in collaboration with HRM and the HFPA. These recommendations are also informed by engagement with Indigenous community members, supported by the Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre. Advisors and community members were compensated for their time and knowledge.

James Doucette shows
Zion how to make
a grass whistle in
Eastern Passage, NS.



*Photo by Chenise Hache/
Reclaiming Our Roots*



Three Mi'kmaw values inform this section:

Etuaptmumk, or Two-Eyed Seeing, is a guiding principle developed by Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall in 2004. Etuaptmumk describes learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledge and ways of knowing, and the process of learning to use both these eyes together for the benefit of all.

Msit No'kmaq, or All My Relations, is a Mi'kmaw value that describes how we recognize and respect all of our human and non-human relations. Msit no'kmaq embodies a kinship approach in relationship building and community development, fostering trust and authenticity in every learning experience.

Netukulimk is the commitment to harvest only what we need, give back what we can, and pass our traditions on to future generations.

“The recovery of the people is tied to the recovery of food, since food itself is medicine: not only for the body, but for the soul, for the spiritual connection to history, ancestors, and the land.”

Winona LaDuke, *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming* (2005)

Y1 22. Establish and fund an Indigenous food-governance model, promoting the right to self-governance and sovereignty, recognizing the right of Indigenous communities to define their own food systems.

- a. Establish an Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Justice Working Group.
- b. Ensure Indigenous representation on the Regional Food Policy Council (or alternative governance model) and on Working Groups.
- c. Use Etuaptmumk (two-eyed seeing) as a guiding principle for ongoing Indigenous governance work and prioritize msit no'kmaq (all my relations) as a core tenant of this work.



*Photo by Chenise Hache/
Reclaiming Our Roots*

23. Support Indigenous partners to provide traditional knowledge sharing and food-skills training. This will enable greater food sovereignty for Indigenous people, recognizing that access to culturally preferred food improves community health outcomes. Embed netukulimk as a core tenet of this work, ensuring a commitment to sustainability, reciprocity, and community stewardship.

- a. Support Indigenous community partners, such as Reclaiming Our Roots, in hosting food-based workshops and in offering Indigenous cooking classes both online and in person, with the goal of supporting Indigenous community members' autonomy to cook traditional and culturally rooted foods.
- b. Promote community awareness and cultural knowledge of food and plants as medicine.
- c. Support HRM community farms and gardens in growing and harvesting sweetgrass and other traditional Mi'kmaw medicines.
- d. Provide opportunities for youth to have reliable and safe access to the land to shift how young people engage with traditional foods and the land itself.
- e. Fund a full-time food-security coordinator staff position at the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC).

Alex harvests an eel using traditional methods at Williams Point, Nova Scotia.

24. Deliver a range of programs to support dignified access to traditional food and groceries. Programs are also needed to ensure there is equipment to store and prepare culturally rooted food.

- a. Expand grocery card support through MNFC for Indigenous community members in need.
- b. Establish a ride share group to support rural and urban community members to physically access grocery outlets and food retailers.
- c. Develop an inventory of food-programming resources and services accessible to and/or developed for Indigenous community members.
 - i. Raise awareness of these resources and services in collaboration with community partners.
- d. Work with local organizations and pursue funding streams through which Indigenous organizations and community members can purchase or install processing and storage infrastructure such as walk-in fridges, deep freezers, cold-storage units, root cellars, and butchering tools.
 - i. Fund the installation of a community freezer and pantry at the MNFC, where community members can access traditional foods supplied by Indigenous or settler hunters, ensuring that:
 - 1. Indigenous hunters' expenses are covered
 - 2. Food is hunted or procured sustainably
 - 3. Food is not taken away from reserve communities that face great food insecurity themselves

- ii. Implement a program to provide Indigenous community members with deep freezers and slow cookers. These tools promote dignity, self-sufficiency, and support access to food.

- e. Support Reclaiming Our Roots in offering an Indigenous food-box program to provide Indigenous community members with traditional ingredients supplemented with local food. Boxes would include educational materials about the food and guidelines for preparing it.

25. Develop community infrastructure and projects that promote economic and social benefit in Indigenous communities.

- a. Create workshops and navigational tools to facilitate Indigenous community access to licensing services, permits, commercially certified kitchens, and food-handling certification resources.
- b. Create and designate spaces for Indigenous community members to sell food and value-added products building community capacity and resilience.
- c. Create a public inventory of Indigenous food resources, businesses, farmers, and growers.



African Nova Scotian Food Justice and Sovereignty

African Nova Scotians are a distinct people with a rich history of prosperity and resilience. They descend from free and enslaved Black Planters, Black Loyalists, Black Refugees, Maroons, and other Black people who inhabited the original 52 land-based Black communities in Mi'kma'ki, Nova Scotia.²⁹

However, due to historic and present-day systemic racism and colonialism, African Nova Scotians are faced with inequities in power, resources, and opportunities. Systemic racism causes chronic stress and trauma, resulting in poorer physical and mental health, and creates barriers such as an inability to access educational opportunities, find and keep employment, access health-care services, and find safe housing. Racial inequity is also ingrained in our food system, as demonstrated by the underrepresentation of Black Canadians in our agriculture sectors, lack of Black Canadians in leadership roles within agriculture organizations, and the overrepresentation of Black people in laborious and precarious roles related to agriculture.

Black food sovereignty recognizes these inequities and embraces “the right of Black people to healthy and culturally-appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. It includes their right to define their own food and agriculture systems and to build their own institutions to advance community capacity and resilience for access to food.”³⁰

These recommendations are designed to address Nova Scotia's legacy of systemic anti-Black racism and dispossession, celebrate the unique and vibrant food culture of the African Nova Scotian community, support strong traditions of homesteading and agriculture, and advance African Nova Scotian and Black food sovereignty.

An African Nova Scotian advisory group was organized to draft these recommendations in collaboration with HRM and the HPPA. These recommendations are also informed by engagement with ANS and Black community members as well as engagement with AKOMA and the Association of Black Social Workers. Advisors and community members were compensated for their time and knowledge.

“Our ancestors have always resisted ownership over our bodies. From the moment we landed in North America, we have found ways to resist. Food was one of these ways. When we carried nothing else, we carried seeds, plaited in our hair, across the Middle Passage to this place. Our food is our sustenance, our freedom, and our culture. Black food sovereignty is a way to express ourselves and continue the legacy of resistance. It is a way to center our health, take back our freedom and regain our agency. Institutionalized systematic racism continues to deny us access to opportunities and resources and Black food sovereignty a vehicle to reclaiming what is inherently ours.”

-Wendie Wilson

26. Build African Nova Scotian food system governance and ANS-centred policy.

This promotes the right to self-governance and sovereignty recognizing the right of ANS communities to define their own food systems.

- a. Establish an African Nova Scotian Food Sovereignty Working Group to:
 - i. Develop an African Nova Scotian food sovereignty plan.
 - ii. Establish and fund an autonomous African Nova Scotian Food Policy Council (or alternative governance body).
- b. Ensure ANS representation on the proposed Food Policy Council and on Working Groups.
- c. Embed the **Nguzo Saba, the seven principles of Kwanzaa** as structural elements of ongoing ANS governance.



Umoja (*Unity*): To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.



Kujichagulia (*Self-Determination*): To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves.



Ujima (*Collective Work and Responsibility*): To build and maintain our community together and make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and to solve them together.



Ujamaa (*Cooperative Economics*): To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together.



Nia (*Purpose*): To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.



Kuumba (*Creativity*): To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.



Imani (*Faith*): To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

27. Provide access to growing space by using public land to advance a reparative economy approach to supporting ANS community resilience, learning, and healing through urban and rural agriculture initiatives.

a. Support the development of ANS-led community gardens and farms where community members can grow, harvest, and process food, building community food literacy.

b. Support the development of ANS-led land link programs, wherein both established ANS farmers and new entrants are supported in accessing land.

i. Use municipal land and spaces to support this work.

c. Support organizations in promoting agriculture awareness and providing agriculture training and education opportunities in the ANS community.



Rielle Williams,
Program Manager at
the Black Cultural
Centre in Cherry Brook
with produce grown in
the Centre's garden.

28. Support community capacity building for ANS-led, ANS-serving food projects, and programs to respond to community food insecurity. These initiatives will provide access to stable and sustainable funding while growing capacity to lead food system transformation through community learning.

- a. Support ANS community partners in hosting traditional food-workshops and programs.
- b. Create spaces where ANS youth feel comfortable and have opportunities to participate in intergenerational food learning with Afro-centric food literacy led by elders.

29. Develop community infrastructure and projects that create economic and social benefits in ANS communities.

- a. Create workshops and navigational tools to facilitate ANS community access to licensing services, permits, commercially certified kitchens, and food-handling certification resources.
- b. Support the development of an ANS-led community food hub that will centralize the storage, processing, marketing, and distribution of ANS-produced food and value-added products.
 - i. Support the development of an ANS food co-op.
- c. Create and designate spaces for ANS community members to sell food and value-added products building community capacity and resilience.
 - i. Create trade and barter opportunities and networks.
- d. Support the development of ANS-owned and -operated groceries, food retailers, and food-based social enterprises.
- e. Create a public inventory of ANS food resources, businesses, homesteads, farmers, and growers.
- f. Create platforms and apps where ANS community members can promote community meals and events.



Ziel Jones, Assistant
Farm Coordinator at
AKOMA's Hydroponic
Garden

30. Support the delivery of culturally rooted community health and knowledge programs. These must be informed by the distinct experiences, culture, and needs of the ANS community.

- a. Provide opportunities and spaces for knowledge sharing through storytelling and oral history, to foster intergenerational and multicultural learnings around food production, preparation, storage, and preservation in the ANS community.
- b. Support ANS community partners in developing and delivering services to improve community health outcomes.
- c. Promote community awareness and cultural knowledge of food as medicine and medicinal plants.

Community volunteers at the Black Cultural Centre.



Food Production

Local food production strengthens the social and economic well-being of our communities, protects and preserves the environment, and builds resilience to global supply challenges and price fluctuations. These recommendations aim to support producer livelihoods and strengthen sustainable food production by providing resources and services to urban and rural food producers; developing the infrastructure needed to support a local food system; enabling secure access to land for sustainable food production; and otherwise supporting short food chains.



31. Expand the Municipality's role in local food production.

- a. Dedicate a portion of municipal parkland to edible landscaping where residents are encouraged to harvest the produce. This will be informed by research and consultation.
 - i. Plant demonstration plots on municipal property in high pedestrian-traffic areas to encourage harvesting and showcase sustainable urban agriculture.
- b. Increase the planting of food-bearing trees when planting new trees in parks and on other civic lands, and encourage community stewardship of these community orchards through partnerships with local gleaning organizations.
- c. Develop a seed bank and seed-sharing program in partnership with Halifax Public Libraries.



Y1 32. Support and expand community gardens and urban

farms as important sites of urban food production and social inclusion, and acknowledge community-garden access as an issue of social and economic equity.

- a. Update, expand and increase funding for the HRM Community Garden Program so that the Municipality can (1) make it easier for community members to access gardening space through community plots and (2) increase its support for existing community gardens.
 - i. Enable and fund the development of a community plots program where the Municipality collaborates with interested communities to develop new plots. HRM will be responsible for developing, resourcing, and maintaining garden plots that community members can access directly through the municipality.
 - ii. Create and fund a community garden and municipal food-production staff position. This HRM staff member will provide Community Developers with administrative support to build community capacity and operate community gardens. This staff member will also support community members in sourcing land and resources (e.g., wood, soil, fertilizer, seedlings) and will serve as a resource on urban agriculture best practices.
 - iii. Build, promote, and regularly update the inventory of municipal land suitable for gardening; showcase HRM community gardens and plots data using the Food4All map and other resources that promote the availability of garden space.
 - iv. Regularly review the HRM Community Garden Program and the proposed community plots program to ensure relevance and functionality.
 - v. Explore subsidizing Halifax Water connection fees and other opportunities for stable water sources to support the gardens and plots.
 - vi. Secure a funding stream to support community gardens in conducting accessibility audits and implementing onsite changes to improve garden accessibility.
 - vii. Promote and explore expansion of the Urban Orchard Program that may provide free fruit trees to gardens on municipal land.
 - viii. Designate urban agriculture and community garden spaces as a community-benefit category for community-benefit agreements.
- b. Increase opportunities for urban agriculture and community gardens in new parks, infrastructure projects, and large municipal projects.
 - i. Increase feasibility of community gardens and urban agriculture when renewing existing parks or creating new ones. This includes installing water connections, creating garden plots or raised beds, and adding other onsite supports.
 - c. Work with community partners to develop new and support existing accessible demonstration farms that produce food for the surrounding community and offer technical training and mentorship in urban farming.



- IP 33. Protect and enable secure access and tenure to land for sustainable food production.** This includes land for community gardeners and small producers.
- a. Develop land-use inventories of public lands, including parks, boulevards, right-of-ways, and rooftops that could be used for urban agriculture.
 - b. Explore measures to preserve existing and expand agricultural land used for food production within HRM.
 - c. Advocate for stronger tools to protect agricultural land across the province.
 - i. Advocate for a comprehensive land-use strategy that will include (1) an agricultural land bank, (2) 0% taxation on land owned by a registered farm or land actively maintained as farmland by a registered farmer, (3) access to Crown land for agriculture use, and (4) support for those who bring land into agriculture production.
 - d. Work with partner organizations to develop a backyard-sharing program.
 - e. Investigate the benefit of municipal property tax incentives and grants-in-lieu-of-tax programs for landowners and municipalities using land for retail food production, such as market gardens and land sharing.

34. Increase the resilience of the local food system by supporting sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices, climate change adaptation, and other ecosystem services.

- a. Use the provincial climate-risk assessment to evaluate and protect agricultural land in HRM.
- b. Work to increase provincial support and funding for renewable energy systems on farms.
 - i. Work with Efficiency Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture to create a guiding document that details the various types of energy-efficiency upgrades that are applicable to farming operations as well as the government programs that support the implementation of these upgrades.
- c. Partner with relevant organizations, such as the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, to demonstrate best practices for sustainable production and support the development of resources to encourage **regenerative agriculture practices**.
 - i. Explore opportunities to promote cover cropping and other soil enhancement and protection measures to enhance and beautify vacant lots and off-season fields.

Regenerative agriculture is a systems-based approach to land stewardship and food production that seeks to rehabilitate ecosystems, with specific practices varying from grower to grower and from region to region. In general, regenerative agriculture can be described as the use of sustainable techniques to improve soil health, increase biodiversity, protect and improve the quality of watersheds, sequester carbon, increase the land's resilience to climate change, and strengthen the health and vitality of the land. Regenerative practices include conservation tillage, rotational grazing, cover cropping, intercropping, and more.

Although recognition and appreciation for regenerative agriculture are growing, it is important to appreciate that many peoples and cultures, Indigenous Peoples in particular, have farmed this way for millennia, and that not all who adopt these practices use this label.

35. Support local food producers to build a multigenerational and economically viable food system.

- a. Support organizations in promoting agriculture awareness and providing agriculture training and education opportunities (e.g., Farm and Workforce Development, Meet Your Farmer, and the Agricultural Technician Apprenticeship Program).
- b. Work with partners at the provincial level to develop farm-succession planning resources and programs through which young farmers can connect with retiring farms.

- c. Advocate for a provincially supported land-access program, such as one that matches farmers who are looking for land to rent or buy with land holders who are looking to lease or sell their property.
- d. Introduce young people to the industry through partnerships with organizations such as Nova Scotia Young Farmers and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture.

36. Explore policies and programs that improve (waste) water management and reuse in agriculture and food production.





Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution

Through policy development and investment in practical programs, local governments can support social, technological, and organizational innovation in supply, processing, and distribution to create a more sustainable and resilient food system. By supporting local food-processing and distribution options, municipalities can shorten food-supply chains and play a role in facilitating a **circular local economy**.³¹ This support for locally-driven activity helps to ensure a sustainable, fair, reliable, and efficient supply and distribution of food into, out of, and within the municipality.

A **circular economy** can be described as an “economic model that aims to avoid waste and to preserve the value of resources (raw materials, energy and water) for as long as possible. Products and materials are continuously (re) circulated – as opposed to a linear model in which they are discarded as waste after use.”



IP 37. Assess the flow of food to and through HRM. Researching the accessibility of quality, affordable foods in communities with a higher risk of food-access issues is important to progressing this recommendation.

Y1 38. Create an enabling municipal environment for the supply, processing, and distribution of local food. This will require support for local food businesses, including farmers' markets, informal markets, retail and wholesale markets, restaurants, and other food distributors.

- a. Develop policies (e.g., property tax exemptions) to expand processing, storage, and distribution of local food.
- b. Support the development of a public market strategy and making HRM a **Market City**. Identify opportunities for multipurpose structures and other municipal infrastructure to be used for farmers' markets.
- c. Explore incentives for local food businesses that produce, process, or supply local food.
- d. Allow community food markets, food-distribution hubs, and stable community supported agriculture (CSA) distribution sites in municipal spaces such as community centres and libraries.
- e. Review and update home-based business regulations to better enable small-scale food and urban agriculture businesses, where feasible.
- f. Promote the development of local food businesses through municipally or provincially funded business supports, such as training, administrative supports, and guidance services.
- g. Work with and promote organizations that offer microloans to aid in the establishment and operation of small, food-based businesses.

- h. Work with neighbouring municipalities to plan for, encourage, and attract value-added food-processing businesses in HRM.
- i. Expand the provision of nutritious and local food in municipally run and supported programs.

IP 39. Improve and expand infrastructure that links buyers to sellers. This will build social cohesion and trust, support cultural exchange, and ensure sustainable livelihoods.

- a. Continue to support the development of the Halifax Regional Food Hub and provincially supported community food networks, creating centralized infrastructure to store, process, market, and distribute local food to serve HRM.
 - i. Design transportation services and supports to help farmers get their products to the food hub.
 - ii. Pilot a local food co-op in collaboration with a local food hub that purchases food from local suppliers as well as other products such as bulk goods to provide access to affordable, good-quality foods.
 - iii. Establish farmer-processor partnerships whereby processors (such as restaurants or bakers) identify products they can predict demand for. Order these products from local farmers prior to planting season so that farmers can plan to meet this market demand.
 - iv. Design a match-making tool or service whereby food retailers with a demand for specific products are matched with producers who are able to supply those products).

40. Advocate for public procurement and trade policies that facilitate local food procurement. This will involve the Municipality, local institutions, and community organizations.

- a. Measure the percentage of local and sustainable food procured by the Municipality, and set goals to increase this to 20% over time.
- b. Advocate for strengthened local procurement policies for hospitals, schools, universities, and other major local institutions.
 - i. Develop a municipal policy(ies) requiring provision of local food at public-engagement events.

41. Support compliance of local businesses with provincial and federal food-safety regulations. This will require supporting efforts to address regulatory barriers faced by food businesses.

42. Promote local sustainable seafood production and consumption.

- a. Through municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, encourage on-land closed-containment fish farms, where appropriate, as a sustainable alternative to open net-pen fish farming.
- b. Work with the Province to advance the concept of an Atlantic Canadian sustainable seafood hub. Include a virtual marketplace that provides real-time information on products and landings.
 - i. Use existing and new processing, cold-storage, transportation, and distribution infrastructure to aggregate and distribute seafood products.



Health, Wellness, and Resilience

Food insecurity is one of the social determinants of health. What we eat and our access to nutrition impacts our well-being. Household food insecurity is associated with poorer physical and mental health, premature mortality, increased hospital stays, and increased health care spending.

As food systems have become reliant on global, corporatized supply chains, traditional diets (typically rich in nutritious, plant-based foods) have become less accessible. This shift has resulted in the increased consumption of highly processed foods, high calorie foods, and animal products. The inaccessibility of nutritious foods has negative impacts on human health and is ecologically unsustainable. Nutritious diets and the regular consumption of fruits and vegetables benefits both our bodies and our planet.³²

However, plentiful access to nutritious foods is reliant on the health and resilience of our food system. Climate change is a critical threat to our food system and negatively impacts both food security and the nutritional quality of our food. As such, food system vulnerabilities must be mapped and addressed, especially as the impacts of climate change are not borne equally. Black, and racialized communities face disproportionate risks that are rooted in a national legacy of settler colonialism, white supremacy, and systematic dispossession.

These recommendations therefore aim to strengthen ecological resilience, increasing our ability to respond to climate change. These recommendations further aim to promote and support access to nutritious food and create the conditions for healthy food environments.



IP 43. Address food insecurity's impact on community health in partnership with Nova Scotia Health Public Health, the IWK Health Centre, the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, academic partners, and commercial food retailers.

- a. Advocate for income-based solutions to effectively address the root cause of household food insecurity. (See recommendation 10, listed under Social and Economic Equity).
- b. Explore the corporate determinants of health, addressing profit-driven increases in the cost of food and determining ways to hold industries accountable.

44. Develop or support programming that increases access to healthy food as a public health measure. This is especially important for food-insecure communities.

- a. Explore the development of a program such as the FoodShare Food Rx program through which registered dietitians or healthcare practitioners can prescribe nutritious food boxes to community members experiencing chronic food insecurity.
- b. Advocate for improved quality and availability of food in long-term-care facilities, ensuring that seniors and people with disabilities have access to sustainable nutritious diets.
- c. Work with the **Dietitians Network of Nova Scotia** to increase awareness of existing free IWK and NSHA nutritional services provided to community members.
- d. Collaborate with community and health partners to connect new and expectant parents experiencing household food insecurity with food resources.

Dietitian services offered through Nova Scotia Health and the IWK are covered by the Province of Nova Scotia. Numerous nutrition education and counselling services are offered in individual and group settings, however the referral processes vary and may require a doctor's note.

Dietitian services can be accessed through private practice/community dietitians without doctor's referrals. The fees for these services will vary depending on each dietitian. Individuals with medical insurance may have partial or full coverage.



IP 45. Develop an emergency food program. This program will help coordinate efforts to increase the resilience of local food systems to climate change and food-supply shortages, particularly in those areas and communities most vulnerable to climate change impacts and breaks in the supply chain.

- a. Evaluate the anticipated impacts of climate change events on HRM's food system, the current climate resilience of the food system, and HRM-specific methods of improving climate resilience and adaptive capacity.
- b. Develop an emergency food plan with funding and resources for emergency responses. In this work, develop partnerships and options for the storage, transportation, and equitable distribution of food during crises.
 - i. Identify communities most vulnerable to food-access barriers in emergencies.
 - ii. Identify, describe, and commit essential infrastructure for the procurement, storage, preparation, and distribution of food supplies such as kitchen facilities with generators, food and refrigerated trucks, and community spaces that will be open during emergencies.
 - iii. Establish the roles, relationships, and expectations for emergency food-service providers to support the procurement, storage, preparation, and distribution of food. Formalize these relationships to ensure partners are prepared for their role in emergency response.
 - iv. Identify other supports required for emergency food-response measures (e.g., food stockpiles).

- c. Integrate food security and emergency food planning in municipal and provincial emergency measures.
- d. Dedicate staff resources to climate-related food work in both municipal government and the community.

46. Promote sustainable diets. Healthy, safe, culturally preferred, environmentally friendly, and equity-based diets can be promoted through relevant education, health promotion, and communication programs.

- a. Share and promote information on sustainable diets through public education campaigns.
- b. Raise awareness about dietary contributions to climate change and provide resources to help residents make climate-conscious food choices.
 - i. Create a guide to help consumers, institutions, and organizations select, access, and prepare sustainable local foods, including ocean-friendly seafood.

IP 47. Work with the Coalition for Healthy School Food and the Province to advocate for universal healthy school food programs and support school food partners on implementation. These programs will provide food that is healthy, regionally sourced, seasonal, and sustainably produced, while also offering the flexibility for schools to tailor programs to meet their communities' unique needs and characteristics.

- a. Ensure that programs offer culturally preferred food; are informed by and employ the knowledge and skills of parents in the community; and provide employment and job-training opportunities.
- b. Support the Mobile Food Market in establishing sustainable relationships with schools to provide fresh vegetables and fruit.
- c. Support the development and operation of meal-programming services for youth during summer months when schools are not in session.

48. Market and promote nutritious food options in municipal buildings and recreation settings.

- a. Set nutritious food at a price point that is affordable for all and that is competitively priced against foods with lower nutritional value.
- b. Prioritize nutritious food in municipal vending.



Photo: Nourish Nova Scotia

49. Explore regulatory and voluntary options to create healthy food environments.

- a. Work with healthy built environment partners and researchers to map and analyze access to healthy food-retail through variation in the quality and quantity of food outlets in communities.
- b. Investigate tax incentives and licensing and zoning policies that support access to healthy food at small-scale or independent grocery stores, especially in neighbourhoods with poor access to healthy food.
- c. Develop municipal zoning by-laws and incentives to improve access to healthy food near schools and to restrict the location and number of fast-food outlets in new developments surrounding schools and community centres.
- d. Test pilot programs that improve access to healthy food in neighbourhoods (e.g., healthy corner stores, pop-up grocery stores, or mobile greengrocers).

50. Advocate for universal access to safe drinking water.

- a. Improve universal access to public drinking water in parks and HRM facilities.
 - i. Explore municipal policies to ensure ready access to free drinking water in parks and other publicly accessible places.
 - ii. Accelerate and increase municipal funding for the installation of drinking fountains in existing parks, advancing the 2020 HRM Parks Washrooms & Drinking Fountains Strategy Policy A-07.
- b. Provide low-cost resources for residents to test their water quality at home, collaborating with Rural Water Watch when working with the rural communities in HRM that are not connected to city water. Promote these resources.





Food Waste

Food waste is food that is discarded or degraded for retail or consumer use. Food loss refers to food that is spoiled, discarded, or reduced in quality between production and distribution. It is estimated that, annually, each Canadian wastes an average of 79 kilograms of food, resulting in significant environmental, economic, and social consequences. Because food loss and waste occur along all stages of the supply chain and across all sectors of the food system, all levels of government, businesses, and communities need to collaborate to prevent and reduce food loss and waste.

These recommendations aim to support the sustainable management and reduction of food waste by adopting a circular economy approach, recovering and redistributing food, and raising awareness of food loss and waste across the food value chain.



51. Convene food system actors to assess and monitor food loss and waste reduction across the food value chain.

- a. In collaboration with partners such as the National Zero Waste Council, Divert Nova Scotia, Second Harvest, and Halifax Solid Waste Resources, identify gaps and develop better systems for the collection of food-waste data to (1) establish a baseline measure of food waste and (2) identify opportunities to address or prevent food waste.
- b. Participate in regional and national conversations on food waste and circular economy.

52. Promote and build on existing initiatives to educate and raise public awareness around food loss, food waste, and the value of household or community-level composting in collaboration with HRM Department of Solid Waste, Halifax Public Libraries, Divert Nova Scotia, and other partners.

- a. Develop and promote tools that support businesses to enable or improve donation, rescue, and redistribution practices, such as Second Harvest's **Risk Reduction Plan**.
- b. Promote public education campaigns to reduce the amount of packaging and non-biodegradable materials that end up in compost.

53. Review and develop policies and regulations to promote recovery and redistribution of safe and nutritious foods using a food use-not-waste hierarchy

- a. Explore the development of policies to require public events to adopt appropriate food-waste strategies, prioritizing prevention and donation.

54. Promote recovery and redistribution of safe and nutritious foods. The target is those foods at risk of being lost, discarded, or wasted from production, manufacturing, retail, catering, wholesale, and hospitality.

- a. Provide assistance to organizations, such as **FOUND Forgotten Food**, community fridges, and other local efforts that serve vulnerable populations, to acquire, process, and distribute surplus commodities and food that would otherwise be lost or destroyed.
- b. Develop or promote matchmaking tools that reduce food loss and increase the diversion of food waste by connecting supply and demand, such as the **Second Harvest Food Rescue App**.
- c. Evaluate opportunities to incentivize businesses and organizations to take tangible measures to reduce food waste.

55. Align with and reflect the proposed Update to HRM's *Integrated Solid Waste Resource Management Strategy*.³³

- a. As part of the update to the Solid Waste Resource Management Strategy, staff plan on exploring circular economy principles and approaches, including collaborations that reduce food waste and promote new opportunities that keep food waste out of the solid waste system.

IP 56. Explore ways to promote household and community-level composting.

- a. Pilot a community composting project in which neighbourhoods or communities are given small-scale composters to compost household waste in central locations such as schools and parks.
- b. Explore a vermiculture pilot project to provide a limited number of low-cost worm composters to community members along with worms, bedding, and instructions.
 - i. Provide mandatory training on vermiculture best practices and maintenance.
 - ii. Partner with Halifax Public Libraries, community food centres, and municipal recreation centres to set up demonstration vermicompost bins.
- c. Leverage the **Master Composter Recycler** program, established in 2019 by Solid Waste, to promote training and education around backyard composting.



Implementation

JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART A - FEBRUARY 2023

HALIFAX



Implementation: Strategies for Success

Six strategies for success were developed through community engagement, creating a framework for implementation of recommendations made in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.



Work Together

We will work across sectors, learn from each other, and build on our strengths. We will prioritize and coordinate measurable goals and actions that focus and enhance our collective impact.



Respond to Changing Needs

While the guiding principles remain constant, the goals, strategies, and how we measure success will adapt to shifting needs and contexts and be regularly reviewed.



Measure Progress

Through the adoption of common goals and tools to measure success, we will work together to collect relevant data and assess progress on an on-going basis.



Engage Local Leadership

Local leadership and regional collaborative governance will link experience and influence across sectors and inform relevant action.



Be Bold

Working together toward a just food system requires creativity and imagination. This is an opportunity to test new ideas, innovate, and challenge the status quo.



Plan for Future Generations

Our work needs to be rooted in principles of Indigenous food sovereignty, environmental justice and social justice so that our actions nourish our land, water, and communities for generations to come.



Next Steps

Establish JustFOOD Working Groups

Following the public launch of Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, HRM and the HFPA will establish formal JustFOOD Working Groups. Working Groups will be responsible for developing the implementation strategies that will appear in Part B of the Plan.

JustFOOD Working Groups will bring together a range of community and government actors with both professional and lived experience. The working group model is a community-based, collective-impact approach to implement key recommendations, while building greater capacity for food system change in HRM. Working Group members will be compensated for their time and expertise; however, it is anticipated that some members' involvement may be covered by their employers.

Formalize Commitments and Develop Implementation Strategies

When Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* is released, JustFOOD Working Groups will begin to develop implementation strategies. Part B of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* will detail these implementation strategies and will include commitments to action on behalf of food system partners and key actors. A final Plan, comprising both Part A and Part B, will be brought to Halifax Regional Council for endorsement in 2023.

Form a Food Policy Council

Implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* will require cross-sector governance. HRM and the HFPA propose that a Food Policy Council be created to replace the HFPA as a collaborative governing body. The proposed Food Policy Council is anticipated to act as a legal entity that will be tasked with coordinating, guiding, and evaluating the implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, which will include oversight of the JustFOOD Working Groups. The Food Policy Council would function in consultation and collaboration with the proposed African Nova Scotian and Indigenous food councils or alternates.

A governance report that details considerations and provides a recommended model, entitled *Governance Structures for the Regional Food System in HRM*, has been prepared by partners at the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University ([see Appendix 1](#)).



Next Steps

Monitor Progress

Recommendations in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* are based on the six categories of the **Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP)**. By signing onto the MUFPP, HRM will be able to use an established monitoring framework to measure the impact of actions in the region and compare progress with other jurisdictions using the same benchmarks. The proposed Food Policy Council will track and review progress to ensure that (1) the council is operating effectively and adapting to the complex work of food system change and (2) the priority recommendations made in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* are progressing. Monitoring steps will include:



- Publish an annual review of a selection of *JustFOOD Action Plan* indicators
- Provide regular updates on implementation progress, including an annual update to city council and a comprehensive five-year review
- Report interim progress online at justfoodhalifax.ca
- Use the virtual food hub to share Plan progress, identify emerging issues, and adapt recommendations based on research and ongoing discussion
- Use community-based developmental evaluation tools for both external and internal evaluation to increase the positive impact of *JustFOOD Action Plan* on our food system while supporting citizen-driven change



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Appendix 1. Building Collaboration: Governance in Halifax's Regional Food System

Governance Report Executive Summary:

In 2019, the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA) committed to co-creating the JustFOOD Action Plan. The Action Plan will be the first regional food strategy for the HRM, one focused on strengthening the regional food system and enhancing community food security. JustFOOD is organized around six principles that originate from the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. Those principles relate to: governance; social and economic equity; food production; food supply, processing, and distribution; health, wellness, and resilience; and food waste (JustFOOD 2022). One outcome contemplated by the Action Plan is the creation of a governance body to oversee the realization of these principles and to provide a forum for collaborative engagement around governance of the regional food system.

In Spring 2022, our research group was asked by the HFPA to study and offer recommendations on the appropriate structure for a JustFOOD governance body. We were asked to provide a reasonably fine-grained analysis of potential organizational structures and constitutive rules and policies to guide decision making under the Action Plan. To that end, we undertook an initial rapid literature scan to identify a set of key criteria that define “good” governance structures in the food systems context. Seven key criteria emerged from that review, which we then brought to members of the HFPA Steering Committee for consultation about our research framework.

Using these seven criteria as a starting point, we then pursued a two-pronged approach. First, we conducted a further review of academic research on local-regional food systems governance to establish what lessons we could identify to help guide development of a governance structure for the Action Plan. Second, we gathered publicly-available data on food policy council structures from around the country in the form of constitutive documents such as terms of reference and organizational bylaws. Using our seven key criteria, we coded these data to extract and synthesize grounded recommendations for structuring a governance body in Halifax. These recommendations range over issues from the size of the body, to the composition of its membership, to its relationship with external stakeholders.

Finally, to contextualize the findings from both our literature review and the primary data, we reviewed relevant legislative frameworks in Nova Scotia and federally. This final step helped us to identify specific legal powers or barriers that might influence the appropriate form of governance in HRM along a continuum of “internal” to “external” structures.

This report presents the findings from our research, organized around the seven-criteria framework we established at the outset and refined over the course of our work.



https://justfoodhalifax.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/justfoodgov_report_Oct2022-3.pdf

Appendix 2: Engagement Design And Results

HRM Food Charter Engagements

HRM and the HFPA conducted extensive engagement on the *HRM Food Charter*, a declaration used as a stepping stone towards the development of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*. Engagement began in 2016 with a public, online survey. In October of 2017, HRM and the HFPA hosted two public engagement events at the Halifax Central Library as well as a question and answer “Lunch and Learn” with Municipal Councillors. The Halifax Central Library engagements included a panel discussion, group discussions, and a keynote address from world renowned food policy expert Wayne Roberts. In addition to these sessions, several targeted community conversations were held later in the year, including: (1) “Food in NS: Our Strengths and Challenges”, presented by the Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Community Health Board; (2) a community level conversation hosted by Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia and the Loaded Ladle; and

(3) “Chili and Charter Chatter,” a community conversation and meal hosted by the Dartmouth North Community Food Centre. Engagement concluded with an HRM staff session on November 24th, 2017. In total, over 200 residents and 30 municipal staff and Councillors participated in the formal Charter-based engagements, with many more participating in community hosted conversations.

HRM and the HFPA worked closely with the Toronto Food Policy Council throughout this series of engagements to build the rationale, connect local efforts to international best practices, and generate excitement and buy-in for a *HRM Food Charter*. Regional Council endorsed the *HRM Food Charter* in December 2019 as part of the municipal commitment to work with the HFPA to develop a food strategy for the region, which became the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.

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Building Awareness

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated the many gaps in our food system, making clear the extent of food insecurity across the region and the essential roles played by our food producers and food workers. In June of 2020, HRM responded by supporting the growing of food at home by distributing veggie seeds, garden packs, container gardens, and planting guides to more than 700 HRM households. These supports were distributed in partnership with Feed Nova Scotia and HRM's YouthLive, Halifax Public Libraries, Community Mobilization Teams, and Parks and Recreation. To support access to good food, 1100 food hampers were distributed through the Mobile Food Market. In 2021, local granola bars and colouring sets were added to approximately 300 Mobile Food Market hampers.

These outreach efforts also built awareness of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, introducing residents to the Plan and inviting them to take a survey or share a story about their food experiences during COVID-19. The survey received 260 responses. Results indicated that during the height of the pandemic, those reporting difficulty accessing food, or worrying about not having enough food, was 10% higher than in pre-pandemic times. A total of 57.6% of respondents reported facing additional challenges accessing food during COVID-19.

Food System Workshops

Engagement for Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region* began in the spring of 2021, with two Food System Workshops. These workshops were designed to convene food system actors and community members; raise public awareness of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*; generate feedback for Plan development, and build a foundation for further community engagement and action.

Workshop #1 was held virtually and was designed to test the JustFOOD Framework of principles and food system goals derived from the *HRM Food Charter*. Two sessions were offered in March of 2021. The workshops had a total of 59 attendees from across the food system. Based on feedback from Workshop #1, the Charter principles and food system goals were clarified and updated. The workshop also resulted in the identification of “strategies for success” to guide the development of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*. A **What We Heard Report** was made public, shared with workshop participants, and posted on the JustFOOD website.

Themes Identified in Workshop #1

ACTION AREAS	SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FRAMEWORK
Collaboration	Indigenous sovereignty
Governance & Policy	Better acknowledging climate change
Education & Awareness	More collaboration (collective impact)
Community Ownership & Control	Plain language goal definitions
Infrastructure	Defining food as a right
Funding	Treating food as an asset

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Workshop #2 was held virtually and two sessions were offered in June of 2021. The workshops had a total of 78 registrants and 30 attendees. Workshop #2 sessions built on directions developed in Workshop #1, with the objective to identify action areas to advance through the development of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, and potential strategies for realizing these actions. Breakout groups were organized based on participants' responses in the registration survey to the question *What do you want the JustFOOD Action Plan to achieve?*

A **What We Heard Report** capturing themes from Workshop #2 was shared with workshop participants and supporters on July 20th. Five Action Areas emerged from Workshop #2:

WORKSHOP #2 ACTION AREAS
Coordinate Collective Action
Expand Community Food Infrastructure
Establish School Food Programs
Increase Food System Resilience
Reflect Community Strengths and Values, including Indigenous perspectives such as Netukulimk and Etuaptmumk.

JustFOOD Website Launch and Social Media

Following the workshops, HRM and the HFPA collaborated with a designer to develop the Plan website, justfoodhalifax.ca, which launched October 15, 2021. The website is the online home of the Plan and hosts the JustFOOD Action Survey and Engagement Toolkit. The website will also serve as a virtual hub for community food resources and local food research. In addition, HRM's **Shape Your City Food Action** project page was used to profile Plan development, host the engagement surveys, and direct visitors to the JustFOOD website.

HRM and the HFPA worked with community partners and HRM planning staff to expand social media outreach. Social media was primarily used to promote engagement opportunities, such as the JustFOOD Action Survey, but also served to celebrate others working to improve our food system. JustFOOD sends email updates to a continually growing list of subscribers, currently at 695 people, providing news on Plan progress and engagement opportunities. JustFOOD also has a growing amount of followers on several social media platforms:

- Facebook - 953 followers
- Instagram - 505 followers
- Twitter - 818 followers

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JustFOOD Engagement Toolkit

The **JustFOOD Engagement Toolkit** was created to support community members and groups in hosting their own conversations about the food system and identify actions to shape the *JustFOOD Action Plan*. Common Roots, Vieth House, and The North Grove used the toolkit to guide their sessions and the toolkit is shared on the JustFOOD website as resource for ongoing food action conversations.

Civic Dinner Kits

In the fall of 2021, HRM and the HPPA distributed 500 Civic Dinner Kits with the help of community partners, including the Halifax Public Libraries, Family Resource Centres, HRM Community Mobilization Teams, Hope Blooms, AKOMA, and the Association of Black Social Workers. Each Civic Dinner contained ingredients to make a pot of soup and a batch of granola bars for 6 to 8 people. Kits included a discussion guide to prompt conversations about food justice and how we can effect positive change within the HRM food system. Dinner hosts had several options for sharing back what they heard in their discussion. This data was entered into the online survey tool and incorporated into the draft recommendations.

As COVID-19 public health restrictions changed, community partners adapted how they used the kits. Some groups used the kits to host a meal and conversation with their community, or prepared them as takeaway meals. Other kits were distributed alongside existing produce pack programs and markets. Others were enhanced with additional ingredients and used for virtual cooking parties, led by local chefs.



Photo: Maddi Tang

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Online Survey

HRM residents were invited to provide feedback online through the JustFOOD Action Survey, which was developed in consultation with the HFFPA steering committee. The survey offered a space for the public to share insights, priorities, goals; and identify actions intended to strengthen our local food system. The survey opened October 15, 2021 and closed March 20, 2022. A total of 197 responses were submitted. As many of the responses were submitted to record group sessions, the total number of people involved was greater than the number of individual surveys submitted.

The survey was designed using the food system principles and goals of the JustFOOD Framework: (1) **Social Justice:** Define Food as a Human Right; (2) **Environment:** Enhance Ecological Resilience; (3) **Health and Well-being:** Grow Knowledge and Skills; (4) **Celebration:** Sharing Our Diversity; and (5) **Local Economy:** Strengthen Regional Economies.

Survey respondents were asked to describe their vision for the food system and provide feedback and ideas for action on any one or more of the 5 goals. This feedback was reviewed and common themes were identified.

Vision

Forty-nine distinct “vision statements” were recorded. The five most common visions for our food system are laid out here.

- a. Healthy food is available and affordable for everyone.
- b. I have better access to fresh and locally grown food.
- c. There is universal basic income and/or living wages.
- d. There is improved geographic access to food.
- e. There is systemic support for local farmers and producers.

These vision statements speak to a desire for a socially equitable food system, where all community members are able to access nutritious and local food with dignity, and where food system workers are valued and receive systemic government and consumer support.

Many of the vision statements speak to a desire for healthy communities. Survey respondents, on the whole, want to see food at the heart of our communities, and suggested that the Municipality promote food security through integrated land use planning, transportation planning, and community design.

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Other visions identified by the respondents include a:

- Food system that actively resists colonialism and white supremacy, and to see a food system approach in which Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) knowledge is respected and BIPOC voices are centred.
- Localized food system.
- Self-sufficient Nova Scotia, in which the province produces enough food locally to protect against climate emergencies or disruptions in the supply chain.
- Food system that promotes sustainable food production and consumption.
- Food system that emphasizes and prioritizes environmental health as the foundation for all health.
- Food system in which a greater number of social services are continually funded by the Municipality and the Province alike.

Social Justice: Define Food As A Human Right

Thirty-six distinct actions were identified through the Social Justice section of the survey. The five most common actions identified in this section are laid out here.

1. Develop a system whereby low-income residents can access discounted / subsidized local food (e.g., social supermarket model), moving away from the food-bank model.
2. Improve the accessibility, affordability, equity of public transportation services and active transport routes for residents in food deserts.
3. Partner with relevant organizations to extend food programming access beyond traditional working hours and on weekends.
4. Support the operations and expansion of the Mobile Food Market and similar low-cost, fresh produce delivery services.
5. Provide in-kind or monetary support to people or groups interested in gardening at home, starting a community garden, or joining an existing garden with plot fees.

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These actions show a desire to support equity-seeking communities and those most vulnerable to food insecurity in accessing nutritious food. Respondents identified income as a root cause of food insecurity, and recommended that a greater number of food-related social services be designed for and provided to food-insecure communities, particularly to low-income community members.

Food sovereignty also emerged as a key theme. Respondents identified the need for a food system in which communities are enfranchised to define their own food systems, and wherein both the means and ends of food production are accessible to all.

- Other key themes identified in the Social Justice section of the survey include the need for:
- Improved, community-based food production and processing infrastructure (e.g., community kitchens and community food hubs)
- Land access and tenure supports in both rural and urban settings
- The need to prevent or redirect food waste wherever possible
- Services, programming, and supports for producers, including new or young farmers; newcomers; farm system workers such as seasonal agricultural workers and temporary foreign workers; housing insecure community members; people with disabilities; single adults living alone; seniors; and students

Local Economy: Strengthen Regional Economies

Twenty-four distinct actions were identified through the Local Economy section of the survey. The five most common actions identified in this section are laid out here.

1. Encourage the development of accessible and affordable farmers' markets in as many communities as possible.
2. Develop policies and education campaigns that support and incentivize local food production and consumption.
3. Support the development of local food hubs.
4. Provide in-kind or financial support to urban agriculture initiatives that produce and market local food.
5. Incentivize small-scale food retail throughout HRM.

These actions identify a desire to support local food consumption and production, thereby returning food dollars to the local economy. Respondents identified small-scale, local food producers and retailers as key actors in the regional economy, and recognized that, by supporting these producers and retailers, we can promote circular economies. Although these actions identify programming and policy supports as important to strengthening our local economy, respondents also identify a need for infrastructure (e.g., food hubs) that enable greater local production, processing, and distribution power. Such infrastructure allows food system activities that might otherwise be outsourced to remain local, thereby keeping food dollars within our local economies.

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Environment: Enhance Ecological Resilience

Twenty distinct actions were identified through the Local Economy section of the survey. The five most common actions identified in this section are laid out here.

- a. Partner with relevant organizations to develop programs, policies, and public education campaigns to encourage regenerative agriculture practices.
- b. Improve the local accessibility of high quality compost.
- c. Promote delicious, plant-rich or plant-based diets through public education campaigns and institutional procurement policies that prioritize plant-based diets.
- d. Develop seed-sharing resources.
- e. Support and collaborate with farmers on a just transition to regenerative practices, including enabling technologies.

These actions show an interest in supporting local agriculture to be a catalyst for improving the health and resilience of our environment. The most common theme was around promoting regenerative agriculture practices. Respondents also showed an interest in access to high-quality compost suitable for agriculture, which is not widely available in HRM. Several respondents suggest that supporting plant-based diets through public procurement and education programs is an avenue for the public sector to support personal health and ecological resilience in the food system. Together these actions show a desire to make both food production and consumption practices more sustainable so that future generations can enjoy locally grown, high quality, nutritious foods.

Health, Well-being, and Resilience: Grow Knowledge and Skills

Thirty distinct actions were identified through the Health, Well-being, and Resilience section of the survey. The five most common actions identified in this section are laid out here.

- a. Increase the number of community gardens and plot allotments in HRM, and provide residents with more spaces to grow food.
- b. Partner with relevant organizations to equip communities with the knowledge to produce and cook healthy food locally and sustainably, through free and low-cost workshops, cooking classes, and more).
- c. Support operations + development of school meal programming services.
- d. Promote food-skills programming and food-literacy programming in schools and for youth.
- e. Develop services and employ a greater number of dieticians to provide free and low-cost nutritional services and to lead public education campaigns around nutrition (and food as it relates to healthcare).

Respondents showed interest in building community capacity for residents to grow their own food and learn to cook healthy meals at home by increasing the number of community garden spaces and food-skills workshops. Healthy school food programming and food-literacy classes were also a common recommendation, showing the importance of schools as opportunities for public health promotion, nutrition, and community development.

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Celebration: Sharing Our Diversity

Ten distinct actions were identified through the Celebration section of the survey. The five most common actions identified in this section are laid out here.

- a. Partner with relevant organizations to host community barbeques and feasts that bring people together and celebrate food.
- b. Explore ways to increase the cultural and ethnic diversity of produce sold at farmers' markets and in stores.
- c. Support organizations in offering culturally diverse food preparation classes with both in-person and virtual attendance options.
- d. Partner with relevant organizations to host public events where community members can share recipes and celebrate local produce and producers.
- e. Support programming opportunities for newcomers to share knowledge and skills with other newcomers and longtime residents alike.

Food brings people together and provides opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue. These actions show an interest in supporting a greater number of community feasts and festivals which celebrate our cultural diversity, and bring vibrancy to the community. Respondents also recommended that farmers' markets seek to increase the cultural diversity of their products. Food-skills workshops should reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of residents, and provide newcomers with opportunities to share their knowledge with the community.

Targeted Engagement

Targeted Engagements sessions were hosted in collaboration with community partners that work with or represent equity-seeking communities and those particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. These Targeted Engagement sessions ran through Phase One of engagement, starting in November 2021 and ending in April 2022. During these focus group sessions, community members were invited to give feedback on actions and priorities for the Plan. These sessions were designed with the recognition that knowledge and expertise lie in communities that experience disproportionate rates of food insecurity, which is often a result of or compounded by systemic dispossession, and that our role is to provide opportunities for these communities to shape our food system. Sessions for migrant workers in the agriculture and seafood processing sectors were hosted by No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia via WhatsApp, and were offered in both Spanish and Jamaican Patois. Overall, targeted engagement sessions were designed to remove barriers and support the participation of these equity-seeking communities in as many ways as possible, working with groups when, where, and how they wanted to be involved, in addition to providing community members compensation for participation. A total of 15 Targeted Engagement sessions were hosted in collaboration with our community partners.

During the targeted engagement phase, HRM and the HFPA organized dozens of meetings with community organizations, government officials, and food system actors such as farmers and agricultural groups. This table lists organizations and government partners engaged by HRM and the HFPA.

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COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

AKOMA
Bayers Westwood FRC
Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia Health Community Health Boards - Central Zone
Chebucto Connections
Common Roots
Dalhousie Urban Garden Society
Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia
Feed Nova Scotia
Halifax Public Libraries
IWK Health Promotion Team
Loaded Ladle
Meal Exchange
Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre and Centre for Child Development
Migrant Workers in the Canadian Maritimes
No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture
Nova Scotia Native Women's Association
ONE North End
reachAbility
Reclaiming Our Roots
Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia
The New Agrarians
The North Grove
United Way Halifax
Veith House
Wooden Monkey Restaurant
YMCA
Young Agrarians-Provincial Ag Land Matching

PROVINCIAL PARTNERS

Joint Prevention and Promotion Committee
Child Poverty Roundtable
Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture
Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Divert Nova Scotia

HRM BUSINESS UNITS

HalifACT
Right of Way
Solid Waste
Planning & Development
Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Parks and Rec: Community Development
Parks and Rec: Urban Forestry
Government Relations and External Affairs: Social Policy
Government Relations and External Affairs: Public Safety
Office of the Mayor

Phase Two Engagement

Feedback

Phase Two of engagement began in May 2022, after a set of proposed recommendations was developed based on a review of Phase One engagement as well as previous work and best-practices research. HRM and the HFPA then sought feedback on the proposed actions to refine and expand them. The actions were first shared with the HFPA Steering Committee members for revisions, then circulated to the partners who participated in targeted engagement sessions. HRM and the HFPA then incorporated comments and suggestions, circling back with partners to review adjusted language.

Advisory Groups

During the analysis of engagement data from Phase One and following the development of Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, HRM and the HFPA identified several critical gaps in Plan recommendations, including but not limited to recommendations pertaining to Indigenous Peoples, the African Nova Scotian community, and the disability community. Although community members and partners from each of these communities had been consulted with during Phase One, HRM and the HFPA identified a need for further consultation, which was achieved through the formation of three distinct Advisory Groups. Advisors were hired to attend collaborative afternoon workshops facilitated by HRM and the HFPA, where participants met to discuss the recommendations and create community-specific actions. Advisory members are invited to continue to participate in the development and implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* through involvement in one or more of the proposed Working Groups.

Appendix 3. JustFOOD Action Plan Framework

JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region

VISION A Halifax region where no one is hungry, where food & people are celebrated, where the local economy is strong, and the environment is protected for generations to come.

Why JustFOOD Matters
Halifax has one of the highest rates of food insecurity¹ among Canadian municipalities. There is a need to build on our strengths through strategic investments, coordination of efforts, and creative collaborations to address inequities and strengthen our food system. JustFOOD will work with community and other stakeholders to identify the actions needed to achieve our VISION and develop the resources and commitments required to make these actions a reality.

Who is Behind JustFOOD?
JustFOOD is co-led by Halifax Regional Municipality and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance, as the backbone for the collaborations and collective effort needed for positive change.

JustFOOD is guided by the principles, goals and strategies for success shown here:

Food Justice is at the core of JustFOOD. Food justice is about making sure that the benefits and risks of our food system are shared fairly amongst us all.

Our Food System is the activities and relationships that influence how we grow, catch, process, distribute, buy & sell, prepare & eat, and dispose of food.

JustFOOD | Please get in touch at justfood@ecologyaction.ca to join the conversation and help JustFOOD grow.

¹ 10/7 people experience household food insecurity. Tarasuk, V., Mitchell, A., Dachner, N. (2016). Household food insecurity in Canada, 2014. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (RIFO). Retrieved from: <http://pood.utoronto.ca>

JustFOOD Principles

The following principles have been adopted from the Halifax Food Charter and serve as foundations for our work:

JustFOOD Goals

The following draft goals have been developed to progress the principles and inform actions:

<p>SOCIAL JUSTICE</p> <p>We all need to eat. Everyone deserves good food that they need and enjoy. We should be able to produce, prepare and access food safely and with dignity.</p>	<p>Define Food as a Human Right</p> <p>Access to food is a basic and foundational human right which we work to make a living reality through systemic change.</p> <p>➔ <i>Sample strategy: Promote living wages to meet basic needs like food and housing.</i></p>
<p>LOCAL ECONOMY</p> <p>Supporting local farmers, fishers, and producers is an essential part of the food system. Local food strengthens our communities and helps us adapt to changes in our world.</p>	<p>Strengthen Regional Economies</p> <p>A robust local food system is supported by our regional food assets and expertise.</p> <p>➔ <i>Sample strategy: Expand and connect local food infrastructure for food processing, storage and distribution.</i></p>
<p>CELEBRATION</p> <p>Food brings people together. It helps us celebrate our culture and traditions, and learn more about each other.</p>	<p>Share Our Diversity</p> <p>Through the establishment of food as a human right, communities are strengthened and brought together through growing, accessing, preparing and sharing food across cultures.</p> <p>➔ <i>Sample strategy: Encouraging school food and garden initiatives to grow and share different food cultures, and involve many generations.</i></p>
<p>HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p> <p>Food is crucial for health and wellbeing, it nourishes and connects us. Communities must be supported and empowered to make it easy to grow, get, eat, and share good food.</p>	<p>Grow Knowledge and Skills</p> <p>People have the ability and tools to access and share knowledge and resources to grow, access, and prepare food.</p> <p>➔ <i>Sample strategies: Expand food literacy programming in public education; use public spaces for food initiatives.</i></p>
<p>ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Food and the earth are precious. We need to produce, share, and eat food in ways that protect the environment and our future.</p>	<p>Enhance Ecological Resilience</p> <p>Lands and waters are honoured, protected and restored so they can sustain us to grow, share, and consume food for generations to come.</p> <p>➔ <i>Sample strategy: Coordinate with HIM's Climate Action Plan and Provincial climate and agricultural initiatives.</i></p>

Strategies for Success

The following are guiding principles for how we can all work together to bring JustFOOD to life:

<p>Work Together</p> <p>We will work across sectors, learn from each other, and build on our strengths. We will prioritize and coordinate measurable goals and actions that focus and enhance our collective impact.</p>	<p>Respond to Changing Needs</p> <p>While the guiding principles remain constant, the goals, strategies, and how we measure success will adapt to shifting needs and contexts and be regularly reviewed.</p>
<p>Measure Progress</p> <p>Through the adoption of common goals and tools to measure success, we will work together to collect relevant data and assess progress on an on-going basis.</p>	<p>Engage Local Leadership</p> <p>Local leadership and regional collaborative governance will link experience and influence across sectors and inform relevant action.</p>
<p>Be Bold</p> <p>Working together toward a just food system requires creativity and imagination. This is an opportunity to test new ideas, innovate, and challenge the status quo.</p>	<p>Plan for Future Generations</p> <p>Our work needs to be rooted in principles of Indigenous food sovereignty, environmental justice and social justice so that our actions nourish our land, water, and communities for generations to come.</p>

Food Sovereignty is the right to healthy and culturally appropriate food that is produced sustainably as well as the right of people to define their own food system.

JustFOOD | Please get in touch at justfood@ecologyaction.ca to join the conversation and help JustFOOD grow.

<https://justfoodhalifax.ca/setting-the-table/justfood-framework/>



HALIFAX



HALIFAX FOOD
POLICY ALLIANCE

justfoodhalifax.ca

ATTACHMENT 3: Letter of Support from JustFOOD Partners

January 19, 2023

Re: Letter of Support for Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*

Dear Mayor Savage and HRM Councillors,

The Halifax Region needs a well-resourced food strategy to coordinate collective action to improve community food security. Nearly one in five HRM households cannot access the food they need. The average rate of household food insecurity across HRM is 18.6%¹ as compared to an average of 15.9%² across Canadian provinces. Access to good food is a social determinant of health and serves as a foundation for healthy communities. Further, the need to build a resilient local food system is more urgent than ever in the face of our climate emergency. Inequities in our communities mean that climate change events and instabilities in our food system have much harsher impacts for some. Food justice and food sovereignty are crucial for a more healthy, just, and sustainable food system.

Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region* represents more than a decade's worth of best practice research and community engagement. The recommendations made in Part A of the Plan reflect both challenges and ideas for action shared by people working in our food system and by those with lived experience of food insecurity.

The [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact](#) (MUFPP) is an international protocol aimed at tackling food-related issues at the municipal level. The *JustFOOD Action Plan* recommendations are structured according to the pillars of the MUFPP. Signing on to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact will provide access to an established monitoring framework and connect HRM to an international community of municipalities that are creating better food systems.

Positive change on this complex issue requires us to continue working together, for the benefit of all. We are committed to supporting the implementation of the recommendations in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region* and continuing to collaborate with the Municipality to make these recommendations a reality.

We, the undersigned, write to express support for Regional Council to:

1. Approve in principle Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*
2. Sign on to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

¹ Statistics Canada. (2022). Canadian Income Survey: Public Use Microdata File. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/72m0003x/72m0003x2021001-eng.htm>.

² Tarasuk V, Li T, Fafard St-Germain AA. (2022) Household food insecurity in Canada, 2021. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). <https://proof.utoronto.ca>



wijewinen



Mi'kmaw Native
FRIENDSHIP CENTRE





ATTACHMENT 4: ALIGNED MUNICIPAL INITIATIVES AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE JUSTFOOD ACTION PLAN

Municipal Initiative	Alignment with the JustFOOD Action Plan Part A	Involvement in Development of Part A
<p><u>Building Poverty Solutions: Ideas for Action (2018)</u></p>	<p>In 2018, HRM partnered with the United Way to develop this report. The report identifies that action is needed to reduce and eliminate poverty in seven focus areas for change, one of which is Food Security. It suggests several immediate food security actions which range from increasing the dignity of accessing affordable fresh food, to innovative approaches to reduce food waste. Longer-term, the report supports working with partners, including the Halifax Food Policy Alliance, to adopt a Food Charter and develop a Food Action Plan (Strategy) for Halifax.</p>	<p>The United Way (UW) have been long-standing members of the HFPA and were instrumental in developing the rationale and foundations for the JustFOOD Action Plan. UW staff were also members of the HFPA government relations and community engagement committees, who were instrumental in developing the Halifax Charter and setting the stage for the Action Plan. COVID challenged UW participation on the HFPA with the relationship shifting from working member to information sharing. UW has signaled that they're interested in rejoining the HFPA and supporting the implementation of JustFOOD.</p>
<p><u>Centre Plan (2021)</u></p>	<p>The Regional Centre Plan was the 1st major municipal planning strategy and land use bylaw update since the 2014 Regional Plan direction to support food security. The Centre Plan permitted urban agriculture uses throughout the Regional Centre, including the processing and sale of foods at an appropriate scale to the local context. It introduced new land uses including urban farms, heritage farms, and the keeping of animals including bees and hens. It also permitted rooftop greenhouse to exceed maximum heights, to reduce barriers for new greenhouses for amenity space or commercial production. These new uses provide more opportunities for local food production and retail in the Regional Centre.</p> <p>Centre Plan is the first initiative of HRM's Plan and By-law Simplification project, which aims to streamline and modernize planning documents across the region. Centre Plan's urban agriculture policies provide a solid foundation for future bylaw updates, as work shifts to focus on suburban (Suburban Plan) and rural (Rural Plan) areas.</p>	<p>The new Centre Plan advanced the JustFOOD goal of reducing barriers to food production and food retail and sets the stage for future planning amendments across the Municipality to increase opportunities for urban agriculture. Staff and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance were engaged in and supportive of the new regulations.</p> <p>Planning staff will be key members of the HRM working group and staff will continue to collaborate on creating a more supportive land use environment for food uses and increased consideration of the impact of planning on food in our communities.</p>
<p><u>Community Gardens and HRM Parks and Recreation</u></p>	<p>Community gardens have flourished on municipal properties for more than 15 years; currently 26 community-lead gardens are in operation with more in the works. HRM's community developers provide guidance to not profits operating or interested in community gardening, guided by the <u>Community Garden Handbook</u> and <u>admin order 2022-007-OP</u>. This form of communal, non-profit agriculture is effective in increasing food literacy and strengthening social</p>	<p>The Community Developers have been key partners in the development of JustFOOD since participation in the 2017 staff workshop. They have continued to be involved as the Plan has evolved, providing invaluable wisdom on community gardens and issues and opportunities around food in their communities. They have supported the identification of key stakeholders, public engagements, and the drafting/review of Part A of the Action Plan.</p>

Municipal Initiative	Alignment with the JustFOOD Action Plan Part A	Involvement in Development of Part A
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**Culture and Heritage
Priorities Plan (CHPP)
(2023)**

cohesion, which support community capacity to address food insecurity and the localizing of our food. The value of community gardens and interest in increased access to municipal land for food production were common themes of JustFOOD engagements.

HRM Parks and Recreation programming also plays a role in promoting food literacy. Parks and Recreation assets can offer community access to food infrastructure like community kitchens and gardens, emergency food, and showcase best practices such as adopting standards for healthy eating in recreational environments.

Staff are working on a staff report and committee review for the draft CHPP. The CHPP is considering ways to support cultural and youth programming through community kitchens and gardens. This action aligns closely with the objectives of JustFOOD which includes multiple recommendations for actions to increase access and opportunities for food production, processing, literacy, and celebration in JustFOOD.

The Plan includes recommendations particular to community gardens and recreation programming. Community developers and recreation staff will be key members of the municipal working group involved in creating the strategies to advance the municipally lead recommendations.

**Diversity & Inclusion
Framework (2018) and
the Office of Diversity &
Inclusion**

The D&I Office provides leadership, strategic direction, policy advice, expertise, and connection to external stakeholders with respect to diversity and inclusion. The Diversity & Inclusion Framework provides guidance to address and remove systemic barriers to facilitate the full participation of everyone. While food isn't specifically mentioned, the importance of food in breaking down barriers and increasing inclusion is baked into D&I's practice. Planning engagements with the community of Beechville demonstrated the value of sharing food in creating a safe space to learn from each other and build trust.

Planning participated in the 2017 municipal staff workshop and were regularly updated as work began to develop the Action Plan, initiated at Planning and Development. Staff are regularly asked to provide comment on land use policies or priority plans related to food access and food production. This is anticipated to continue through implementation of both CHPP and the Action Plan and continued exploration of ways to further mutual objectives. Planning staff will be key members of the municipal working group.

The D&I Diversity Advisers have been invaluable for the engagement and community outreach components of the Plan. Staff and the HFPA workshopped with Advisers to establish the Engagement Plan and regularly sought their advice on how to identify, connect, and build trust with the diverse voices crucial for making JustFOOD a community-based plan. Advisers have supported community workshops, hosted engagements, and made connections to key leaders. Staff will continue to look to D&I for guidance on how to remove barriers and create opportunities for full participation in the development and implementation of the JustFOOD Action Plan.

**Food at the Library
(Halifax Public Libraries
policy document), 2022**

This policy outlines HPL's guiding principles for food and libraries, which closely align with JF's principles including:

- Contributing to a healthy food environment in our communities,
- Creating welcoming spaces to enjoy, share and connect through food,
- Offering an equity-based approach to food resources - for all,

HPL staff have been closely involved in the HFPA and development of the Action Plan including: long-standing membership on the HFPA Steering Committee, engagement hosts & promoters of JustFOOD, and contributors to plan recommendations, writing and reviewing. HPL is a key partner in this work, at the forefront of identifying need and acting to improve food security and community wellbeing. This response has mainly been in the form of developing and sharing food

Municipal Initiative	Alignment with the JustFOOD Action Plan Part A	Involvement in Development of Part A
<p><u>HalifACT 2050 (2020)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building capacity to support sustainable models for food – in the Library & community, and • Supporting the development of food skills and knowledge. <p>Climate change is an immediate, complex crisis threatening the health and stability of food systems and how we produce, transport, process, and consume food are significant contributors to climate change. Action 5.3.3 of HalifACT 2050 to “improve food security and food systems resilience” recognizes this inter-relationship and the need to include climate change as a core component of the JustFOOD Action Plan. JustFOOD recommendations are working towards a more resilient and localized food system where residents have increased access to good food and increased capacity/sovereignty over food. Shortening supply chains through more opportunities for local food, production, identifying and protecting critical infrastructure, promoting sustainable diets, decreasing food waste/loss, and supporting more sustainable farming practices are integral to the Plan.</p> <p>Emergency food planning is also an important component of the relationship between HalifACT 2050 and JustFOOD. Vulnerable populations are more heavily impacted by extreme weather events and other crisis. Weather events often create large scale power outages, causing extensive food loss which disproportionately impacts those without the resources and supports for replacement. As much of our food is imported, we are very vulnerable to breaks in our long supply chain which are increasing in frequency with climate change.</p>	<p>literacy programs, food infrastructure, and food distribution. HPL will continue to be key partners in the implementation of the JustFOOD Action Plan and advancement of mutual goals through working group participation, subject matter expertise, and Plan review.</p> <p>HalifACT staff are part of the JustFOOD project team, meeting weekly and providing expertise as needed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on progress and share learnings and opportunities to better understand the relationship between food and climate change, • Develop knowledge products, review plan language, and other outreaches to increase awareness and action towards climate change adaptation and food system resilience, and • Increase understanding, advocacy, collaborations, and capacity for emergency food responses. <p>Emergency Management Office (EMO) and HalifACT collaborated in 2022 to order a refrigerated food truck to address a gap in existing equipment and facilities for food distribution in times of emergency. Once on the road, the truck can be used to store and access perishable food during times of crisis. It could support disproportionately impacted communities and enhance emergency preparedness throughout HRM, while also be used in non-emergency times as a resource for community-based food organizations.</p> <p>HalifACT and food Staff will continue to support EMO, the Province, and others to ensure access to food, critical infrastructure, vulnerable populations, and climate change impacts are factored into emergency planning.</p> <p>HalifACT staff will continue to be integral members of the JustFOOD team as we work together towards a more resilient and sustainable food system for all.</p>
<p><u>Halifax Common Master Plan (HCMP) (2023)</u></p>	<p>Work to develop the HCMP is at the stage of public consultation to validate the Plan, identify priorities, and gather feedback. The approved in principle HCMP recommends increasing ownership and animation of the</p>	<p>Connections between the JustFOOD Action Plan and the HCMP have been minimal to date. Staff will participate in implementation planning for the HCMP and work more closely with Parks & Recreation staff to consider how to align the work</p>

Municipal Initiative	Alignment with the JustFOOD Action Plan Part A	Involvement in Development of Part A
<p data-bbox="191 444 457 505">Halifax Green Network Plan (2018)</p> <p data-bbox="191 610 457 735">HRM's Solid Waste Strategy Review (2023) and Solid Waste Resources (SWR)</p>	<p data-bbox="506 185 1192 440">Commons by diverse groups through creating spaces for social gathering, especially around food. The Plan also recommends providing more opportunities and infrastructure for small scale food vendors and markets; communal food gardening to increase food access, knowledge sharing, and inclusion; picnic & BBQ infrastructure; and potentially interpretive signage for food plants and other supports for food literacy.</p> <p data-bbox="506 444 1192 829">The HGNP recognizes the importance of preserving open space for food production through the following actions:</p> <ul data-bbox="506 509 1192 602" style="list-style-type: none"> • protect valued agricultural land, • encourage small scale agriculture, and • consider food production when designing open spaces. <p data-bbox="506 607 1192 829">SWR has played a major role in education and management of food loss and food waste; HRM was one of the 1st municipalities to implement an organics collection program in the late '90s. In addition to waste diversion, SWR aligns with the JustFOOD priority to promote food literacy through education on prevention, diversion, and valuing food waste such as their Master Composter Recycler program.</p> <p data-bbox="506 867 1192 1154">In 2017, Regional Council approved the Organics Management Strategy, which lead to the direction to replace two aging facilities with a new facility, planned to begin in 2024. In addition to prevention of food waste/loss, the potential to use municipally collected organics for food production was a significant theme of JustFOOD engagements. The new facility is anticipated to produce higher quality compost and other by-products which could be used for agriculture.</p> <p data-bbox="506 1192 1192 1349">SWR is also undergoing a review of the Solid Waste Strategy, the recently adopted terms of reference speaks to alignment with the JustFOOD action plan and advancing the mutual goals of reducing food waste and promoting a circular economy.</p>	<p data-bbox="1199 185 1900 245">and support mutual objectives as both Plans move towards implementation.</p> <p data-bbox="1199 444 1900 602">Staff are in regular contact regarding implementation of the HGNP and the mutual goal of promoting sustainable agriculture and food production in open spaces. A representative from the HGNP team will be asked to join the HRM working group to ensure continued alignment and mutual advancement.</p> <p data-bbox="1199 607 1900 764">SWR staff have been involved in the development of JustFOOD since the staff workshop in 2017. They have participated in community engagements and have reviewed and authored the Part A background and recommendations sections pertaining to food waste.</p> <p data-bbox="1199 802 1900 927">GREA staff have also been engaged in the review of the Solid Waste Strategy and will be supporting an upcoming project with the National Zero Waste Council to explore advancing a more circular food system in the Halifax Region.</p> <p data-bbox="1199 964 1900 1089">JustFOOD includes several recommendations which will directly involve SWR. SWR staff will be key members of the municipal working group to support ongoing collaborations, mutual objectives, and realistic implementation strategies.</p>
<p data-bbox="191 1354 474 1414">Integrated Mobility Plan (2017)</p>	<p data-bbox="506 1354 1192 1446">The IMP states that one of the benefits of improved mobility is providing convenient connections to daily destinations and access to activities such as shopping for healthy food.</p>	<p data-bbox="1199 1354 1900 1446">Staff and IMP team have focused collaborations to date on information sharing and updates. The intention is to invite a representative of the IMP team to the HRM Working Group to</p>

Municipal Initiative	Alignment with the JustFOOD Action Plan Part A	Involvement in Development of Part A
<p><u>Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy & Livable Community (2014) & the Mayor's Office</u></p>	<p>The movement and accessing of food significantly impact our current patterns of mobility. The Toronto Food Policy Council estimates as many as 1 in 4 car trips are for food shopping, contributing significantly to congestion on the roads.</p> <p>Food distribution is also a significant component of the movement of goods in our Region. Equitable access to affordable, convenient, culturally appropriate, and quality food is key for community food security and wellbeing. Food outlets as well as space for food production are crucial components of complete communities and integrated mobility planning.</p> <p>The Mayor's Conversation emphasized the need to address local food production and promotion, access to healthy food and increasing rates of obesity and chronic disease. This coupled with the strengthening relationship with NSH-PH set the groundwork for the formation of the HFPA and the Municipality's growing role in health promotion and community food security.</p>	<p>align food action and integrated mobility planning.</p> <p>A staff member from the Mayor's Office has been a member of the HFPA since its inception in 2013. In addition, the Mayor has continued to champion for HRM playing a strategic role in developing sustainable food systems and promoting food security.</p>
<p><u>People. Planet. Prosperity. Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27 (2022) & Halifax Innovation District (2020-22)</u></p>	<p>While Halifax has enjoyed great success overall since the last economic strategy (2016-21), not all residents and communities have shared in this increased prosperity. In the Inclusive Economic Strategy, endorsed in March 2022, the Halifax Partnership and HRM have committed to determining how best to attract workers back to the restaurant and other sectors hardest hit by the pandemic, and to use the Halifax Innovation Outpost to address complex social issues, including food security, with start-ups and the broader community.</p>	<p>In addition to providing an opportunity to learn more about local food entrepreneurs and organizations, Staff support for the Food Action Challenge has also increased awareness and participation in the JustFOOD Action Plan. Most participants in the Challenges have signed on to the JustFOOD supporters mailing list and expressed interest in staying connected to the Plan as it evolves. Staff will continue to seek opportunities to advance the Action Plan with private sector support.</p>
<p><u>Public Safety Strategy 2018-2022</u></p>	<p>For the last 3 years, the Halifax Innovation Outpost has run a Food Action Challenge to support startups, scaleups, local organizations, and communities in prototyping ideas to provide adequate, healthy, safe, affordable, and sustainable food. Staff have worked closely with Halifax Partnership to align this work with the principles of the JustFOOD Action Plan.</p> <p>The Public Safety Strategy aims to increase public safety by addressing the root causes of crime. Food insecurity and</p>	<p>Public Safety Office (PSO) and food staff are housed together in GREA so regularly update and collaborate. Community</p>

Municipal Initiative	Alignment with the JustFOOD Action Plan Part A	Involvement in Development of Part A
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poverty are recognized as risk factors for involvement or victimization by criminal behaviour. A priority objective of the Strategy is to improve access to healthy, affordable food (3.2) with four actions to achieve this:

- encourage urban agriculture,
- incorporate food production and food access into municipal programs and assets,
- help local food banks and
- support student nutrition programs.

These actions are supported and expanded through the JustFOOD Action Plan, which also shares the guiding principle of collective impact and collaborative effort. The Public Safety Strategy is currently undergoing an update, building on the foundations of the 2018 Plan. While not speaking directly to food justice, the proposed new Strategy is seeking more resources which could support the advancement of JustFOOD and community-led action towards increasing community wellbeing and food sovereignty.

Regional Council Priority Outcomes (2021-25)

HRM’s Strategic Priorities Plan (SPP) 2021-25 lays out priority outcomes under the 4 categories of Prosperous Economy, Communities, Integrated Mobility, and Environment. The JustFOOD Action Plan Part A includes recommendations that advance all 4 Council Priorities and is identified as a [strategic initiative that aligns with Regional Council & Administrative Priorities and Outcomes](#).

The SPP includes food under Affordable Communities and establishes the priority outcome that:
“The municipality demonstrates leadership and fosters

Mobilization Teams (CMTs) promoted awareness of the Action Plan as well as hosted civic dinners and other engagements with their communities. JustFOOD team also supported the community garden at George Dixon through the donation of soil, seeds, and gardening tools from the seed & garden kit engagements.

The PSO has continued to invest in gardening infrastructure with 2 new greenhouses and 10 additional garden beds planned for the Halifax North End. PSO has developed a strong relationship with Veith House, who have provided ongoing support, advice, a gardening manual, and discounted seedlings to the gardeners. The PSO organized a workshop with Veith House with gardeners from the George Dixon Garden and Veith House urban farm. It was a skills-building session, and included the harvesting, prepping, and sharing of a meal from produce from the urban farm. The event grew knowledge and bridges across cultures through food and urban farming. PSO also invited ISANS to facilitate a session for George Dixon gardeners to build cross cultural competencies among newcomers and long- time residents, the training was so successful that the gardeners have asked for part 2.

The PSO also mobilized CMTs during Hurricane Fiona to facilitate emergency food supports to CMT communities.

Staff will continue to collaborate with the PSO in food initiatives, community capacity building, emergency food planning, and other opportunities to advance joint objectives. Staff participate in the Corporate Planning’s Strategic and Business Planning, working with representatives across business units to:

- provide updates on progress and challenges,
- report and advise on the KPIs, [Strategic Performance Snapshot](#) and other scorecards,
- learn more about other initiatives and business units, and
- ensure that others are aware and engaged in municipal food work and the JustFOOD Action Plan.

It is anticipated that Staff will continue to participate in


Municipal Initiative	Alignment with the JustFOOD Action Plan Part A	Involvement in Development of Part A
<p><u>Regional Plan (2nd Plan Review began in 2020)</u></p>	<p><i>partnerships that provide access to a range of quality, affordable municipal amenities and services, including housing options, in safe vibrant communities. The following initiative support the Affordable Communities priority outcome:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Affordable Housing and Development</i> <i>Increasing Food Security and Strengthening the Local Food System”</i> <p>The 2014 Regional Plan (RP) recognized the importance of preserving agricultural land and requires that promotion of food security be considered when designing communities.</p> <p>The 2nd five-year review of the RP began in 2020. The Regional Plan Review Work Plan includes a commitment to supporting the creation of JustFOOD in Regional Plan policy and to using its tools and resources to better understand community vulnerability to food insecurity when updating or creating planning policies. The Action Plan will also be advanced through Regional Plan commitments to removing barriers and creating incentives for food uses such as urban agriculture, agricultural operations, food outlets, etc. and reducing the impact of non-agricultural uses on viable agricultural land.</p>	<p>Strategic and Business Planning, which will become more important as the Action Plan moves into implementation and the municipal role and responsibilities are better articulated.</p> <p>Municipal food systems planning at HRM originated with the 1st 5-year RP review, when promotion of food security emerged as a prominent theme of engagements. The 2014 RP direction to promote food security when designing communities enabled planning staff to prioritize food systems planning in long range regional planning, the home of municipal food work until the portfolio moved to GREA in April 2022.</p> <p>Regional and Community Planning is leading the Regional Plan Review through Phase 4, the development of the Draft Regional Plan. The timing aligns well to ensure that the RP and JustFOOD reflect and support mutual objectives around consideration of food in secondary planning & discretionary planning, increasing opportunities and incentives for food supportive land uses, and protection/prioritization of agricultural land.</p> <p>A member of the RP team will be a key member of the HRM working group to facilitate continued collaborations and mutual support.</p>
<p><u>Social Policy Administrative Order (AO) (2020) and originating Staff Report (2020)</u></p>	<p>Food security is 1 of 3 focus areas of the 2020 Social Policy AO, as a critical and complex social issue that requires HRM to work in collaboration across sectors and with those most affected. JustFOOD Part A is built upon the foundations of working together to strengthen collective impact and creating space for community wisdom and power. The Social Policy goals closely align and support the 6 JustFOOD principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Strengthen community health and wellbeing; 2) Enhance equity and inclusion; and 3) Build on social assets and community capacity. 	<p>In April 2022, recognizing the cross-cutting nature of municipal food work that requires collaboration with internal and external partners, the food portfolio was moved to Government Relations and External Affairs (GREA). This move strengthened connections to the Social Policy team and aligned projects. Staff will continue to be members of the Social Policy Working Group, providing regular updates on municipal food action, identifying connections to other municipal work, and advancing the implementation of Social Policy. Social Policy staff will be key members of the HRM working group and are anticipated to have a greater role as JustFOOD moves towards implementation.</p>


Municipal Initiative	Alignment with the JustFOOD Action Plan Part A	Involvement in Development of Part A
<p>Universal Land-Use Bylaw Changes: Egg Laying Fowl (2021)& Market Gardens (initiated in 2022)</p>	<p>Egg Laying Fowl: In 2021, land use bylaws across HRM have been amended to permit the keeping of hens for personal use and household food supply in all residential zones, with the number of hens permitted related to lot size.</p> <p>In September 2022 Council initiated a process to consider amending all planning documents to remove barriers to development of market gardens. Market gardens are small scale food production and retail activities where food is grown or prepared to be sold or shared with the community.</p> <p>The egg-laying hens and market garden amendments support two consistent JustFOOD themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased demand and interest in local food production, and • the need for HRM to reduce barriers and create opportunities for local food production. 	<p>Staff and the HFPA were consulted in the development of the Egg-laying fowl bylaw amendments. The market gardens initiation report was also developed in consultation to ensure it reflected alignment and connection to JustFOOD.</p> <p>Planning staff will host public engagement in 2023 with the goal of returning to Council with amendments before the end of the year. The direction from initiation is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow urban agriculture and market gardens across the Municipality- extending the urban ag provisions introduced in the Regional Centre to the remaining plan areas so that anyone can use land to grow food; • Consider what areas should be exempt from requiring a permit to permit urban ag; and • Consider addition of secondary production of food to allowable urban agriculture uses. <p>Planning staff will be key members of the municipal working group and collaborations will continue to advance mutual goals of reducing barriers and exploring incentives for food uses and factoring food into planning decisions.</p>
<p>Urban Forest Master Plan(UFMP) (2013)</p>	<p>The UFMP provides guidance for the sustainable management of our urban forest, focusing on the ecological, economic, and social services provided by trees through the lens of human health and safety. The UFMP received significant public feedback on the need for more fruit and nut trees in the urban forest, Urban Forest Value A27 is to encourage citizens to plant food-producing trees on their properties and Public Priority 3 speaks to the need for additional programs to incentivize homeowners to plant trees (including food trees). The UFMP supported the development of the first municipal urban orchard, a grove of fruit and nut-bearing trees in Leighton-Dillman Park. On request, the Urban Forest program will also provide fruit trees to community gardens on municipal property.</p>	<p>JustFOOD and Urban Forest staff have been connecting on the importance of food production in the urban forest since the staff workshop in 2017. In October 2022, the UFMP hosted its first tree giveaway, providing over 1,000 trees, including approximately 300 edible fruit trees. JustFOOD supported the tree giveaway and handed out 300 packages of veggie seeds along with postcards on how to get involved in the Action Plan. Program staff anticipate that the tree giveaway will be a yearly event with likely a higher proportion of fruit trees as they were the first selected.</p> <p>The Urban Forest team are about to embark on an update to the URMP, creating an Urban Forest Management Plan with an inclusive approach to engagement. It is anticipated that the new Plan will place a higher priority on fruit and nut trees, recognizing their many benefits to culture, environment, and food security. The two groups will continue to collaborate as both Plans evolve and are in discussion on collaboration for some of the ongoing work and pilot projects.</p>


Municipal Initiative	Alignment with the JustFOOD Action Plan Part A	Involvement in Development of Part A
<p>World Council on City Data (WCCD) & Geographic Information Services (GIS)</p>	<p>HRM became a member of the WCCD in 2021, which includes metrics on food security and food production. In 2022 HRM reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Urban Agriculture per 100,000 of population (includes farms, community gardens, greenhouses, and other major urban agriculture infrastructure) • Basic Service Proximity (number of residents living within 300M of an outlet with some food and those within 500M of an outlet that could meet majority of food needs. <p>Work is underway to expand data collection for the current WCCD and corporate KPIs (area of school gardens, rates/risk of food insecurity) and for new KPIs such as amount of food produced locally. GIS staff supported statistics and data presented in the background section of Part A.</p> <p>The PSO has been working towards a community wellbeing index or similar tool to better identify vulnerability and address inequities. The template index is currently working with crime and housing data, Staff are working towards including vulnerability to food insecurity and other food related data for future iterations.</p>	<p>HRM’s GIS team have supported the mapping of food resources since work began in 2015 on the draft Community Food Assessment Toolkit. Work continues to evolve the beta story map Food4All into an open data, participatory map of a broad range of food resources from agricultural land to community kitchens to food advocate agencies to food literacy services. Staff continue to explore opportunities to resource Food4ALL to continue data collection and make the food map more user friendly and useful.</p> <p>Staff have been working closely with GIS and WCCD Staff to share data and develop KPIs. These collaborations will continue and expand as the Action Plan moves towards implementation and performance measurement for the recommendations, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing more comprehensive data to better inform current KPIs, • identifying new KPIs as additional data is sourced, and methodologies evolve; and • advancing/creating data tools like the Food4All story map and measures of community vulnerability to food insecurity to be used for the virtual food hub and in other municipal projects to ensure food security is factored into the conversation.

ATTACHMENT 5: IN PROGRESS & YEAR 1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 1: JustFOOD Part A: Update on In Progress Actions

Part A Recommendation	 Update on In-Progress Recommendations	Proposed Lead(s) & Partners
3a. Continue creating an enabling municipal environment for food.	Consider new policies and infrastructure projects using a food system lens. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good foundations for change have been laid in municipal plans, such as the Regional Centre Plan (see attach #4 for details). • HRM contain to build on these foundations to update existing planning documents and in the development of new plans and policies. • Approval of Part A and ongoing involvement of municipal staff in working groups and advance of Part A will provide additional capacity for food system lens on municipal work. • Ongoing resourcing for this and new tools will be consideration of the working group 	Lead: HRM-GREA Partners: HRM Working Group
4b. Continue to advocate for collaboration across municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government, and with Indigenous nations.	Seek to align the <i>JustFOOD Action Plan</i> with the <i>Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy</i>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Strategy will develop policies, programs, and initiatives to raise awareness of, improve access to, and increase the production of healthy local food. • JustFOOD recommendations requiring Provincial leadership and community engagement findings have been regularly shared with the Strategy leads. • The Province has engaged with key food system actors, including HRM/HFPA, industry players, and community-level partners. • What We Heard report anticipated in Spring 2023 with Strategy anticipated later this year. • Moving forward, will continue to provide feedback on the development of Strategy and seek opportunities for alignment with JustFOOD. 	Lead: HFPA Partners: Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture & other Provincial departments
6a. Develop Food4ALL, an interactive mapping resource.	Continue to develop Food4ALL- food resource map. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently have a beta-stage participatory story map (web-based application designed in collaboration with GIS) for regional food resources, including commercial food assets such as grocery stores and convenience stores; not-for-profit food assets such as food distribution centres and community kitchens; food production and processing infrastructure such as abattoirs and packaging centres; food waste initiatives; local food assets such as farmers markets; and food advocate resources. • What is needed now is basic data on food resources that can be shared in open data. • Additional work is required to fill in data gaps, and test/refine the functionality of the Food4ALL story map. Staff are exploring options for resourcing this work. 	Lead: HRM-GREA & GIS Partners: confirmed: Community Health Boards - Central Zone, potential: FeedNS, Province- Community Services

Part A Recommendation	 Update on In-Progress Recommendations	Proposed Lead(s) & Partners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food4ALL will evolve to serve the needs of end users and likely will have different applications in the future such as emergency planning, understanding food environments and vulnerabilities to food insecurity, and matching supply and demand. 	
8. Pursue membership in Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP).	<p>Propose that Halifax Regional Council sign on to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will be complete if Regional Council agrees with the recommendation to sign HRM onto the MUFPP, as recommended in this report. The Action Plan recommendations have been organized in alignment with the MUFPP and requirements/implications of becoming a signatory are outlined in the report and Attachment 6. 	Lead: HRM- Mayor's Office & GREA
15a. Promote participatory education, training, and research opportunities.	<p>Support municipal facilities to offer food literacy programming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many municipal facilities currently offer food literacy programming. For example, Halifax Public Libraries provide free snacks, host food literacy workshops, and provide resources and tools for local food lovers and changemakers, year-round. The municipal working group and project team will continue to research best practices for the use of municipal facilities for food uses including literacy, production, processing, and distribution. Work will also continue to organize community-level conversations and support community partners such as Every One Every Day and the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre to offer food literacy programming. 	Lead: HRM/HFPA Partners: Halifax Public Libraries, Halifax Recreation, Every One Every Day, Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
33d. Protect and enable access and tenure to land for sustainable food production.	<p>Pilot a backyard sharing program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program to connect homeowners with yards with people who want to grow food but do not have land. HFPA is working with the Baxter Research Group at the Schulich School of Law to explore models and legal considerations for backyard sharing program. Baxter Group has developed a draft guidebook which project team and spring intern will refine. Next steps will include designing a program to connect landowners with growers. This could involve development of an online platform or app, which will require funding and maintenance. 	Lead: HFPA Partners: Baxter Research Group
37. Assess the flows of food to and through the Region.	<p>Support the ongoing food flows research by the Baxter Lab at Dalhousie Schulich School of Law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research project to assess the flow of food into and throughout HRM including estimates of volume of food imported and exported from HRM, as well as the transportation methods international, inter & intra provincial. Work began at Baxter Research Group in 2020 and is ongoing Valuable for assessing food supply chains and support analysis of food distribution, regional planning, goods movement, and emergency management. 	Lead: Baxter Research Group Partners: HFPA, various data holders such the Port of Halifax

Part A Recommendation	 Update on In-Progress Recommendations	Proposed Lead(s) & Partners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborations continue with Baxter Research Group to support this work with the goal of building results into KPIs and progress monitoring systems. 	
39a. Improve and expand community food infrastructure.	<p>Continue to support the development of the Regional Local Food Hub.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2020, a coalition came together to create an initial concept for a local food hub for HRM, gap in infrastructure that is challenging the ability to support, access, and distribute local food in the Halifax region. • Province (CCTH) funded Flourish Community Development Co-operative to create a feasibility study and business case for a Halifax-based food hub. • Flourish has developed a proposal for a minimum viable food hub and action plan for next phase of the work to hire an ED and groundwork for standing up the Regional Food Hub. • This proposal is currently with the Province for consideration of additional funding to take project to next steps, with a goal of launching the food hub in Spring 2024. The Regional Local Food Hub aligns well with the goals of the Provincial Food and Beverage Strategy to increase production/consumption of local food. • There may be an in-kind, financial, or land/infrastructure ask coming to HRM to support this project. • Staff are members of the working team (Coalition) proposing the Hub, linking this work with the JustFOOD Action Plan. 	<p>Lead: Regional Local Food Hub Coalition & Flourish Consultants</p> <p>Partners: HFPA, FMNS, NourishNS, Mobile Food Market, FeedNS, CCTH</p>
43a. Address food insecurity's impact on community health.	<p>Continue to advocate for income-based solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HFPA is an official signatory to the Basic Income NOW Atlantic Canada Consensus Statement and is a partner in basic income advocacy work. • On November 9th, 2022, Basic Income NOW Atlantic Canada hosted government representatives and Indigenous leaders across Atlantic Canada to discuss their questions, opportunities, and challenges around Basic Income. • The HFPA will continue to support this advocacy work as well as that of Basic Income Nova Scotia. The HFPA will also continue to explore the potential impacts of basic income on food access and security. 	<p>Lead: HFPA</p> <p>Partners: Basic Income Nova Scotia, HRM</p>
47. Support the implementation of a universal healthy school food program.	<p>Continue to engage with the Nova Scotia Advisory of Coalition for Healthy School Food.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On March 1, 2022 Regional Council endorsed the Coalition for Healthy School Food's call for development of a universal cost shared, healthy school food program for Canada • The HFPA is an active member of the steering committee for the Nova Scotia Advisory of the Coalition for Healthy School Food (NS-CHSF), which advocates for universal healthy school food that is locally sourced and culturally appropriate. The NS-CHSF is engaged in dialogue with federal and provincial governments to help shape the 	<p>Leads: HFPA/HRM</p> <p>Partners: NS-CHSF</p>






Part A Recommendation	 Update on In-Progress Recommendations	Proposed Lead(s) & Partners
45d. Develop a Climate Emergency Food Program.	<p>delivery of a universal lunch program in Nova Scotia.</p> <p>Dedicate staff resources to emergency food work in both municipal government and the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are significant knowledge gaps regarding emergency preparedness and the current capacity of the municipality to be self-sustaining in times of emergency and crisis. • Work continues in partnership with HalifACT to identify and investigate food assets and critical infrastructure that are available to support emergency food responses during times of crisis. • The project team is actively pursuing funding to develop an Emergency Food Playbook to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) identify communities most vulnerable to food-access barriers in emergencies; (2) identify and commit essential infrastructure for the procurement, storage, preparation, and distribution of food supplies; (3) establish and formalize roles, relationships, and expectations for emergency food-service providers; and (4) identify other supports required for emergency food-response measures (e.g., food stockpiles). • Conversations are also ongoing within HRM and with the Province, key food system actors to collaborate together towards the development of the emergency food playbook and formalizing agreements on roles and responsibilities in times of crisis. • Significant work is needed for collaborative research, network development, community mobilization, procurement of infrastructure, and general playbook implementation. 	<p>Partners: HRM-HalifACT, Emergency Management Office, Provincial Dept. of Municipal Affairs and Housing, United Way, Community Service Providers</p>
56a. Reduce food waste and promote recovery and redistribution of safe and nutritious foods.	<p>Pilot a community composting program in which a central composting site on publicly accessible land is maintained by community members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Community Development student with Acadia University has committed to developing an implementation strategy for this project including budgets, model options, site selection, building community partnerships, and mobilizing community participation. • Conversations are underway with EveryoneEveryDay and Dixon community garden staff and gardeners on collaborating on a community composter with potential for a design session in Spring 2023 and a composter build in Summer/Fall 2023. 	<p>Lead: HFPA</p> <p>Partners: HRM Parks & Recreation</p>

Table 2: JustFOOD Part A: Update on Year One Recommendations

Part A Recommendation	 Update on Year 1 Recommendations	Proposed Lead(s) and Partners
<p>Establish foundational food system governance mechanisms:</p> <p>1. Establish and fund a Food Policy Council.</p> <p>1b.i. Develop a sustainable funding stream.</p> <p>9d. Use key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate plan progress.</p>	<p>Establish a legally incorporated Food Policy Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The primary recommendation of the Action Plan is the development of a Food Policy Council to replace the HFPA that centres racial equity and increases community power. The Baxter Group has been researching an appropriate structure for JustFOOD governance as part of a larger SSHRC grant on food governance. Visit here for their report outlining the key criteria for success and recommended structure for the new Council. The proposed Food Policy Council would act as a legal entity for coordinating, guiding, and evaluating the implementation of the <i>JustFOOD Action Plan</i>. Work will continue with the Baxter Group to finalize the governance model and Terms of Reference. Then work will begin to recruit members to the Food Policy Council, ensuring equity and community representation, as well as legal incorporation. Establishing the Council will require significant funding for staffing, operations, and the establishment of a funding stream to support community-based food initiatives that address food access and build the food system (see Recommendation 1b.i.) <p>Develop a sustainable funding stream operated by the Food Policy Council to provide financial support for community-based initiatives that address community food access and the health of the local food system. T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This funding stream would streamline the distribution of funds, through a simple, peer reviewed process that prioritizes grass roots, community-led, equity-seeking initiatives. Establishing this funding will require the standing up of the Food Policy Council, budget development, and program tools such as applications, committee review processes, eligibility criteria, and reporting requirements. <p>Establish a set of foundational key performance indicators using the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These indicators will be used to monitor and evaluate food system progress in HRM, aligned with the Action Plan principles and recommendations. This work will require data collection and research; consultation with 	<p>Leads: HRM and HFPA</p> <p>Partners: Baxter Research Group (Food Law Workshop), Province of Nova Scotia, Community Researchers, GIS &IT specialists</p>

Part A Recommendation	 Update on Year 1 Recommendations	Proposed Lead(s) and Partners
	<p>governments, institutions, community organizations, and community members; and strategic planning to develop a regular assessment and review protocol for the chosen indicators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership in the MUFPP will enable access to other regions who have utilized the MUFPP indicators which can be tailored to our context. 	
<p>Establish a central repository of food system resources:</p> <p>5. Create a virtual community food hub.</p> <p>6a. Expand the Food4All map.</p>	<p>Create a virtual food hub, expanding on the justfoodhalifax.ca website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The virtual food hub will enhance the availability and exchange of data, including research from academics and institutions as well as data generated by civil society and other partners. • The virtual hub will also be used to share Plan progress, identify emerging issues, and adapt recommendations based on research and ongoing discussion. <p>Expand the Food4All resource map</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above for more details on ongoing work to create Food4ALL • Once the baseline map and date are established of food resources, next steps would be to create tools that would enable users to tailor information such as seek data on culturally-specific food programs and services or emergency food infrastructure, etc. • Further research and outreach are needed to determine what end users want from the map. Ideas identified to date include tools for: finding food in your community, matchmaking supply and demand, evaluating local food environments, etc. • The development of the Virtual Hub and the evolution of Food4All will require programming and design support; research and data collection; and ongoing communication with community organizations, service providers, institutions, academics, Plan partners, and food system actors. 	<p>Lead: HFPA & HRM</p> <p>Partners: HRM, various food system actors</p>
<p>Support food sovereignty efforts among equity seeking communities:</p> <p>2. Support the development of an Indigenous Food Governance Model and an African Nova Scotian Food Policy Council. Secure</p>	<p>Work with Indigenous partners such as the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC) to explore and support the development of an Indigenous Food Governance Model and Food Sovereignty Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MNFC has committed staff to support the work to build an autonomous indigenous governance body and advance work towards sovereignty. • This could involve collaborating with established Indigenous governing bodies. • Work will continue to explore and secure funding for the proposed Indigenous 	<p>Leads: MNFC, ANS Working Group</p> <p>Partners: HFPA & HRM</p>

Part A Recommendation	 Update on Year 1 Recommendations	Proposed Lead(s) and Partners
<p>funding for both.</p>	<p>food governing body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HFPA/Food Council would support the proposed governing body to become autonomous/sovereign. <p>Work with the African Nova Scotian Food Justice and Sovereignty Working Group to establish an African Nova Scotian Food Policy Council and Food Sovereignty Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ANS working group has submitted a funding application for advancing this work. A terms of reference for the working group to advance this action has been developed and is under review. Advancing this action may involve collaboration with ANS or Black governance scholars. Work will continue to secure funding for the proposed governing body. The HFPA/Food Council would support the proposed governing body to become autonomous/sovereign. <p>The establishment of an Indigenous Food Governance Model and an African Nova Scotian Food Policy Council will require continued funding for staff power, consultants, and community partner engagement. Future asks may include funding for community grants and other programs.</p>	
<p>Create an enabling municipal environment for the supply, processing, and distribution of local food:</p> <p>17. Use municipal facilities and assets to offer food programs, grow food, and support public food infrastructure.</p> <p>38d. Allow community food markets, food-distribution hubs, and stable community supported agriculture distribution sites in municipal spaces.</p>	<p>Use municipal facilities and assets to offer food programs, grow food, and support public food infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of these initiatives are demonstration projects like sustainable agriculture practices in public spaces; installation of community pantries, kitchens, fridges, and other public food infrastructure; expansion of farmer's markets and Community Supported Agriculture sites, etc.. This will require interdepartmental collaboration and planning within the Municipality to identify and designate appropriate sites, explore opportunities, ID resources needed, create a budget, determine responsibility/ongoing maintenance, and deliver. Community, service provider and food system actors will also need to be engaged and involved. Key partners will be Parks & Recreation and Libraries who have portfolio of public spaces. 	<p>Lead: HRM, GREA in consult with other departments (Parks & Recreation, HPL, etc.),</p>

Part A Recommendation	 Update on Year 1 Recommendations	Proposed Lead(s) and Partners
<p>Support community gardens and urban farms as important sites of urban food production and social inclusion:</p> <p>32b.i. Establish a community plots program.</p> <p>32b.ii. Create and fund a community garden and municipal food-production staff position.</p>	<p>Enable and fund the development of a community plots program where the Municipality collaborates with interested communities to develop new plots.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRM would develop, resource, and maintain garden plots for food production that community members could access for gardening. • The development of a community plots program will require extensive engagement with community members, Community Developers, and with various other Municipal departments (e.g., Parks and Recreation). • Best practice research from other regions will inform the development of this program. • The program will also require a detailed implementation plan and budget. A pilot program may be necessary to gauge interest in and success of the program design. <p>Create and fund a community garden and municipal food-production staff position.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This staff member would support the Community Developers in offering the Community Gardens program through urban agriculture expertise, sourcing land and gardening resources (soil, fertilizer, seedlings, etc.) and other operational supports. • This FTE would also support the community plots and other municipal food production initiatives. Creation of the new position would require collaboration between GREA, Parks and Recreation, HR and other municipal departments to determine location, budget, job description, and other aspects of the role. 	<p>Lead: HRM: GREA, Parks & Recreation, HR</p>

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

The first international agreement among cities from all over the world, committed to developing sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban food systems

The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact is the main legacy of the Universal Exhibition "**Expo Milan 2015**" *Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life*. The Milan Pact is a global commitment of mayors from around the world that considers food as an entry point for the sustainable development of growing cities. It represents the **main framework for cities** and international stakeholders active in the definition of innovative **urban food policies**.

Milan Pact framework for action

The Milan Pact is the result of a participatory process among 46 cities that worked together in 2014, under the guidance of a technical team of international experts, on the definition of **37 recommended actions structured into 6 integrated categories**:

- Governance
- Sustainable diets and nutrition
- Social and economic equity
- Food production
- Food supply and distribution
- Food waste

The Pact's framework presents a holistic approach towards the food system. A dedicated Monitoring Framework supports cities in better structuring and assessing the impact of their food policies.

Governance and Membership

Today the Pact gathers more than 220 cities, representing a total of 400 million inhabitants over the 6 MUFPP regions. The governance of the Pact is ensured by a Steering Committee which is elected every two years and has the duty of representing signatory cities at global level. It is composed of 13 members, 2 per each MUFPP region besides the Mayor of Milan that is the permanent Chair.

MUFPP Global Fora

Global Fora are a fundamental moment for the MUFPP network, an opportunity for our signatory cities to meet, exchange knowledge and practices, participate in technical workshops, share progresses and build partnerships. Over the years, the MUFPP Global Fora have become a regular occurrence for cities and key actors in the global urban food agenda. As per tradition, the Global Forum hosted each time in a different Milan Pact city. The city of Rio de Janeiro will host the 8th MUFPP Global Forum on 17-19 October 2022.



2015, Milan. Signing ceremony of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.



2016, FAO, Rome. 2nd Global Forum.



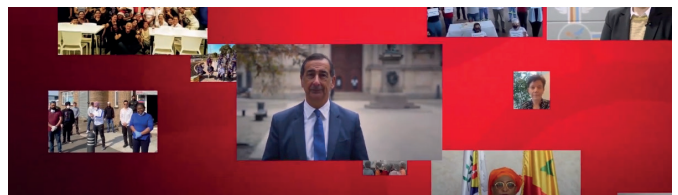
2017, Valencia. 3rd Global Forum.



2018, Tel Aviv. 4th Global Forum.



2019, Montpellier. 5th Global Forum.



2020, Milan. 6th Global Forum Online.



2021, Barcelona. 7th Global Forum.

Regionalization process

Cities face similar challenges and seek appropriate solutions for their specific geographical and socio-economic contexts. Therefore, the Milan Pact promotes a regionalization process allowing signatory cities and regional stakeholders to meet and exchange knowledge regularly within their respective regions, in strong coordination with the Steering Committee representatives. In 2021 the first MUFPP Regional Action Plan was prepared and discussed during the Global Forum.



Africa

In 2016 the 1st MUFPP Regional Forum was held in **Dakar**, Senegal. The objective was to create a network of African cities to exchange best practices and to work on the themes of the Milan Pact particularly linked to the challenges of the African context. Other forums followed in **Brazzaville** 2018, **Niamey** 2019 and **Ouagadougou** 2021.



2016 Dakar regional forum of African cities

Europe

Within **Eurocities**, the European association of cities, the debate around food and cities is today particularly dynamic. Thanks to the inputs of the MUFPP, a **Working Group Food** has been established in 2016. It is chaired by **Milan** and **Warsaw** and it encounters **51 cities** that gathered 10 times in **Brussels, Birmingham, Valencia, Amsterdam, Lyon, Ghent, Montpellier, Almere, Milan** and **Barcelona**. This working group focuses on sharing knowledge; on promoting joint projects; advocating towards the European bodies. The next meeting will be held on 22-24 June in Almere during the Floriade Exposition 2022.



2017 Valencia regional forum of European cities.

South America

The 1st Regional Forum of South America was hosted by **Rio de Janeiro** in 2019. The forum aimed at promoting the dialogue between South American cities to improve food governance in the region.



2019 Rio de Janeiro regional forum of South American cities.

Eurasia & South West Asia

The 1st regional forum was held in **Kazan**, Russian Federation on the topic "Healthy Cities. Healthy Nutrition for Children".

Asia Pacific

Cities in the region are increasing their interest in urban food policy within a context of significant urban growth. The MUFPP is working to disseminate knowledge and to foster cooperation on these through the European programmes: IURC and ICP. The Milan Pact leads the **Asia Pacific Food Policy Training** throughout 2022-2023 to strengthen the diffusion of best practices and innovative food policy actions in the region.



2021 Kazan regional forum of Eurasia & South West Asian cities.

Milan Pact's international commitment

The Pact is fully involved in the definition of the global food agenda. Over the last years, the Secretariat has been working to raise the attention on urban food policies and catalyze the energies of the international stakeholders towards the Pact's objective.

International partnerships and projects

Over the years, it has consolidated an increasing number of partners ranging from international organisations, to universities and research centres to NGOs. the Pact acts as driver, gathering the opportunities coming from its partners and linking them to its signatory cities.

Thanks to its strong network, the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact is constantly promoting the creation of international consortia to gather to spur the Milan Pact's objectives through city-to-city exchange.

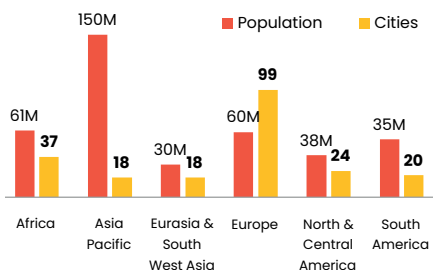


The global food agenda

The Pact is constantly striving to highlight and emphasize the major role of mayors in the transformation of the food system, thus contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. At the same time, it is committed to mobilizing resources and attention within the international community to support the work that cities are undertaking.

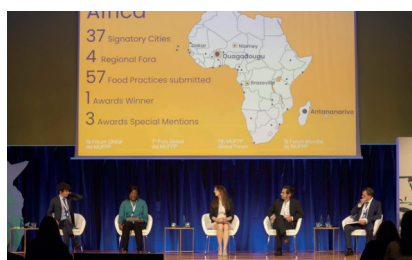


Recordings of the UNFSS session
<https://youtu.be/G-P38jnb1Mo>



UNFSS Pre-Summit

On the occasion of the UNFSS Pre-Summit, the MUFPP Secretariat has organized a plenary session "City and Local Food Systems" focusing on the role of cities as key drivers of the food system transformation. It involved mayors and representatives of international stakeholders who addressed the main concerns about the issue and highlighted the importance of bringing together different stakeholders along with the need of planning across different levels of governance to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Thanks to the contribution of our signatory cities (Milan, Bristol, São Paulo, Seoul, Addis Ababa, Copenhagen, Quelimane) the Pact has been able to showcase its cities' efforts and solutions to the entire international community.



Sharing knowledge among the Signatory Cities

Milan Pact Awards: 370 practices shared

One of the most important goals of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact is to stimulate the **exchange of practices and learning** between signatory cities. Therefore, since 2016 the City of Milan and the Cariplo Foundation launched the **Milan Pact Awards (MPA)**. The aim is to recognize the most creative efforts and monitor cities' improvements since they joined the Pact. Every year the practices submitted are evaluated by an **international evaluation committee**, that awards the most innovative practices. Moreover, the Awards are an opportunity to show to international stakeholders the proactivity of the MUFPP cities and their leadership role in shaping food systems. Year after year the Pact gathered 370 practices, creating a **unique library of food policies** officially approved by mayors. This library represents the Pact's common knowledge. The increasing participation demonstrates the growing enthusiasm towards food policies and their relevance in the mayoral agenda.



2019 Milan Pact Awards ceremony in Montpellier.

Milan Pact Talks on Covid-19 food responses

In 2020, the **Milan Pact Talks** have been launched as the pandemic showed that food policy teams from the MUFPP cities had to face unexpected challenges to provide concrete solutions to citizens' needs. The Talks collected **109 videos on Covid-19 food responses** worldwide. They are a tool to share knowledge about the measures undertaken to face, adapt and mitigate food system shocks.

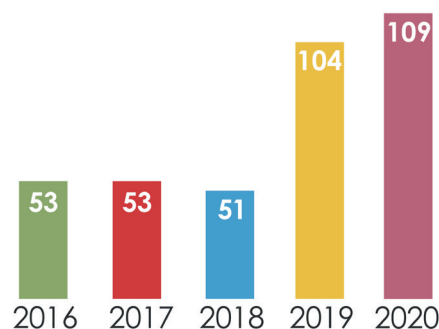
Observing the video submissions, it is possible to cluster the actions undertaken during the emergency in three main fields of action: **ensuring food aid** to the population in need, **promoting healthy diets** and food habits at the time of **pandemic and recovering** the food economy. The full library is available on the MUFPP YouTube channel.

Milan Pact Awards 2022 & Fellowship Programme

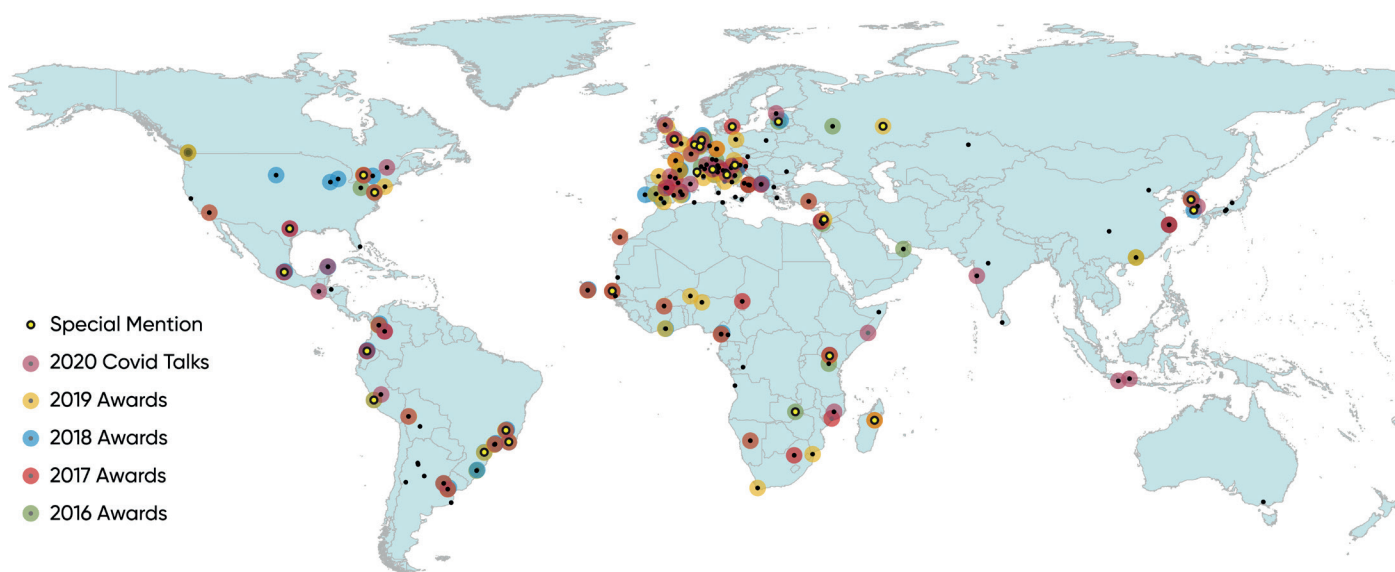
The call of **6th edition** of the **Milan Pact Awards** is open to submission. MUFPP signatory cities can **submit up to 3 practices** connected to the six MUFPP categories.

The **2022 Milan Pact Awards Ceremony** will be hosted in **Rio de Janeiro** (Brazil) during the 8th MUFPP Global Forum from 17-19 October.

The highest scoring practice for each of these six MUFPP categories will be awarded with the participation to the MPA Retreat in Milan during 2023. The **MPA Retreat** will be the trigger for the development of the MUFPP Fellowship Programme.



Practices submitted at the Awards per year.



- Special Mention
- 2020 Covid Talks
- 2019 Awards
- 2018 Awards
- 2017 Awards
- 2016 Awards

7 Years of activities	225 Signatory Cities	6 MUFPP Regions	7 Global Fora	16 Regional Fora	13 Steering Committee cities	370 Practices collected
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Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

15 October 2015

Acknowledging that cities which host over half the world's population have a strategic role to play in developing sustainable food systems and promoting healthy diets, and because while every city is different, they are all centres of economic, political and cultural innovation, and manage vast public resources, infrastructure, investments and expertise;

Noting current food systems are being challenged to provide permanent and reliable access to adequate, safe, local, diversified, fair, healthy and nutrient rich food for all; and that the task of feeding cities will face multiple constraints posed by inter alia, unbalanced distribution and access, environmental degradation, resource scarcity and climate change, unsustainable production and consumption patterns, and food loss and waste;

Acknowledging that accelerated urbanisation is profoundly impacting our world – in economic, social and environmental dimensions – which therefore necessitates re-examination of the ways in which cities are provisioned with food and water as well as other essential goods and services;

Acknowledging that hunger and malnutrition in its various forms exist within all cities, posing great burdens on individual health and well-being and thus generating major social and economic costs at household, community, municipality and national levels;

Recognizing that family farmers and smallholder food producers, (notably women producers in many countries) play a key role in feeding cities and their territories, by helping to maintain resilient, equitable, culturally appropriate food systems; and that reorienting food systems and value chains for sustainable diets is a means to reconnect consumers with both rural and urban producers;

Acknowledging that urban and peri-urban agriculture offers opportunities to protect and integrate biodiversity into city region landscapes and food systems, thereby contributing to synergies across food and nutrition security, ecosystem services and human well-being;

Acknowledging that since food policies are closely related to many other urban challenges and policies, such as poverty, health and social protection, hygiene and sanitation, land use planning, transport and commerce, energy, education, and disaster preparedness, it is essential to adopt an approach that is comprehensive, interdisciplinary and inter-institutional;

Acknowledging that civil society and the private sector have major roles to play in feeding cities, bringing experience, innovation and campaigns for more sustainable food systems and mainstreaming the critical need for a socially inclusive and a rights-based approach in urban food policy;

Recalling that cities have made commitments to address climate change; to promote strategies and actions for mitigating GHG emissions and adapting cities to the impacts of climate change on urban food systems (for example in successive World Urban Fora and the upcoming Habitat III United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development); and to promote sustainable management of biodiversity through city biodiversity initiatives as part of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

Acknowledging that cities and their neighbouring territories will be active in operationalising international processes such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets in the post-2015 Development Agenda; that they will be involved in the upcoming negotiations for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21), as well as contribute to the Zero Hunger Challenge, address sustainable urban diets in the Second International Conference on Nutrition, and play important roles in the post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;

Gathering in Milano on the occasion of the Milan Expo *Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life*,
we hereby state:

BY SIGNING THE MILAN URBAN FOOD POLICY PACT,
WE, THE MAYORS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS,
COMMIT TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. We will work to develop sustainable food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse, that provide healthy and affordable food to all people in a human rights-based framework, that minimise waste and conserve biodiversity while adapting to and mitigating impacts of climate change;
2. We will encourage interdepartmental and cross-sector coordination at municipal and community levels, working to integrate urban food policy considerations into social, economic and environment policies, programmes and initiatives, such as, inter alia, food supply and distribution, social protection, nutrition, equity, food production, education, food safety and waste reduction;
3. We will seek coherence between municipal food-related policies and programmes and relevant subnational, national, regional and international policies and processes;
4. We will engage all sectors within the food system (including neighbouring authorities, technical and academic organizations, civil society, small scale producers, and the private sector) in the formulation, implementation and assessment of all food-related policies, programmes and initiatives;
5. We will review and amend existing urban policies, plans and regulations in order to encourage the establishment of equitable, resilient and sustainable food systems;
6. We will use the Framework for Action as a starting point for each city to address the development of their own urban food system and we will share developments with participating cities and our national governments and international agencies when appropriate;
7. We will encourage other cities to join our food policy actions.

Signed by:

(Name of the authorised representative of the city or local government)

Representing (the city of ____)

Date:

Urban Food Policy Framework for Action

The nature of this Framework for Action is **voluntary**. Its purpose is to provide strategic options to those cities aiming **to achieve more sustainable food systems** by adopting the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact launched by the Municipality of Milan on the occasion of the 2015 Expo “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life”.

The Framework builds upon the direct experience of participating cities and takes into account relevant diverse commitments, goals and targets. While the options have been organized into thematic clusters, they should be seen as entry points towards achieving the common goal of sustainable food systems. Most interventions (such as school meals or community gardens) may fall under the jurisdiction of more than one municipal agency or department. Most interventions will have an impact on multiple dimensions (economic, social, health and environment) of sustainable development.

Cities can select, adapt and group options into guidelines as necessary to suit their particular situations. Links to related information material and samples of best practices are available as a complementary set of guidance materials.

Recommended actions: ensuring an enabling environment for effective action (governance)

1. **Facilitate collaboration across city agencies and departments** and seek alignment of policies and programmes that impact the food system across multiple sectors and administrative levels, adopting and mainstreaming a rights-based approach; options can include dedication of permanent city staff, review of tasks and procedures and reallocation of resources.
2. **Enhance stakeholder participation** at the city level through political dialogue, and if appropriate, appointment of a food policy advisor and/or development of a multi-stakeholder platform or food council, as well as through education and awareness raising.
3. **Identify, map and evaluate local initiatives** and civil society food movements in order to transform best practices into relevant programmes and policies, with the support of local research or academic institutions.
4. **Develop or revise urban food policies and plans** and ensure allocation of appropriate resources within city administration regarding food-related policies and programmes; review, harmonize and strengthen municipal regulations; build up strategic capacities for a more sustainable, healthy and equitable food system balancing urban and rural interests.
5. **Develop or improve multisectoral information systems** for policy development and accountability by enhancing the availability, quality, quantity, coverage and management and exchange of data related to urban food systems, including both formal data collection and data generated by civil society and other partners.
6. **Develop a disaster risk reduction strategy** to enhance the resilience of urban food systems, including those cities most affected by climate change, protracted crises and chronic food insecurity in urban and rural areas.

Recommended actions: sustainable diets and nutrition

7. **Promote sustainable diets** (healthy, safe, culturally appropriate, environmentally friendly and rights-based) through relevant education, health promotion and communication programmes, with special attention to schools, care centres, markets and the media.

8. **Address non-communicable diseases associated with poor diets and obesity**, giving specific attention where appropriate to reducing intake of sugar, salt, trans fats, meat and dairy products and increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables and non-processed foods.
9. **Develop sustainable dietary guidelines** to inform consumers, city planners (in particular for public food procurement), food service providers, retailers, producers and processors, and promote communication and training campaigns.
10. **Adapt standards and regulations to make sustainable diets and safe drinking water accessible** in public sector facilities such as hospitals, health and childcare facilities, workplaces, universities, schools, food and catering services, municipal offices and prisons, and to the extent possible, in private sector retail and wholesale food distribution and markets.
11. **Explore regulatory and voluntary instruments** to promote sustainable diets involving private and public companies as appropriate, using marketing, publicity and labelling policies; and economic incentives or disincentives; streamline regulations regarding the marketing of food and non-alcoholic beverages to children in accordance with WHO recommendations.
12. **Encourage joint action by health and food sectors** to implement integrated people-centred strategies for healthy lifestyles and social inclusion.
13. **Invest in and commit to achieving universal access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation** with the participation of civil society and various partnerships, as appropriate.

Recommended actions: social and economic equity

14. **Use cash and food transfers**, and other forms of social protection systems (food banks, community food kitchens, emergency food pantries etc.) to provide vulnerable populations with access to healthy food, while taking into consideration the specific beliefs, culture, traditions, dietary habits and preferences of diverse communities, as a matter of human dignity and to avoid further marginalization.
15. **Reorient school feeding programmes** and other institutional food service to provide food that is healthy, local and regionally sourced, seasonal and sustainably produced.
16. **Promote decent employment for all**, including fair economic relations, fair wages and improved labour conditions within the food and agriculture sector, with the full inclusion of women.
17. **Encourage and support social and solidarity economy activities**, paying special attention to food-related activities that support sustainable livelihoods for marginalized populations at different levels of the food chain and facilitate access to safe and healthy foods in both urban and rural areas.
18. **Promote networks and support grassroots activities** (such as community gardens, community food kitchens, social pantries, etc.) that create social inclusion and provide food to marginalized individuals.
19. **Promote participatory education, training and research** as key elements in strengthening local action to increase social and economic equity, promote rights-based approaches, alleviate poverty and facilitate access to adequate and nutritious foods.

Recommended actions: food production

20. **Promote and strengthen urban and peri-urban food production** and processing based on sustainable approaches and integrate urban and peri-urban agriculture into city resilience plans.
21. **Seek coherence between the city and nearby rural food production**, processing and distribution, focussing on smallholder producers and family farmers, paying particular attention to empowering women and youth.

22. **Apply an ecosystem approach to guide holistic and integrated land use planning and management** in collaboration with both urban and rural authorities and other natural resource managers by combining landscape features, for example with risk-minimizing strategies to enhance opportunities for agroecological production, conservation of biodiversity and farmland, climate change adaptation, tourism, leisure and other ecosystem services.
23. **Protect and enable secure access and tenure to land** for sustainable food production in urban and peri-urban areas, including land for community gardeners and smallholder producers, for example through land banks or community land trusts; provide access to municipal land for local agricultural production and promote integration with land use and city development plans and programmes.
24. **Help provide services to food producers in and around cities**, including technical training and financial assistance (credit, technology, food safety, market access, etc.) to build a multigenerational and economically viable food system with inputs such as compost from food waste, grey water from post-consumer use, and energy from waste etc. while ensuring that these do not compete with human consumption.
25. **Support short food chains**, producer organisations, producer-to-consumer networks and platforms, and other market systems that integrate the social and economic infrastructure of urban food system that links urban and rural areas. This could include civil society-led social and solidarity economy initiatives and alternative market systems.
26. **Improve (waste) water management and reuse** in agriculture and food production through policies and programmes using participatory approaches.

Recommended actions: food supply and distribution

27. **Assess the flows of food to and through cities** to ensure physical access to fresh, affordable foods in low-income or underserved neighbourhoods while addressing sustainable transportation and logistics planning to reduce carbon emissions with alternative fuels or means of transport.
28. **Support improved food storage, processing, transport and distribution** technologies and infrastructure linking peri-urban and near rural areas to ensure seasonal food consumption and reduce food insecurity as well as food and nutrient loss and waste with an emphasis on diversified small and medium scale food businesses along the value chain that may provide decent and stable employment.
29. **Assess, review and/or strengthen food control systems** by implementing local food safety legislation and regulations that (1) ensure that food producers and suppliers throughout the food chain operate responsibly; (2) eliminate barriers to market access for family farmers and smallholder producers; and (3) integrate food safety, health and environmental dimensions.
30. **Review public procurement and trade policy** aimed at facilitating food supply from short chains linking cities to secure a supply of healthy food, while also facilitating job access, fair production conditions and sustainable production for the most vulnerable producers and consumers, thereby using the potential of public procurement to help realize the right to food for all.
31. **Provide policy and programme support for municipal public markets** including farmers markets, informal markets, retail and wholesale markets, restaurants, and other food distributors, recognizing different approaches by cities working with private and public components of market systems.
32. **Improve and expand support for infrastructure** related to market systems that link urban buyers to urban, peri-urban and rural sellers while also building social cohesion and trust, supporting cultural exchange and ensuring sustainable livelihood, especially for women and young entrepreneurs.
33. **Acknowledge the informal sector's contribution** to urban food systems (in terms of food supply, job creation, promotion of local diets and environment management) and provide appropriate support and training in areas such as food safety, sustainable diets, waste prevention and management.

Recommended actions: food waste

34. **Convene food system actors to assess and monitor food loss and waste reduction** at all stages of the city region food supply chain, (including production, processing, packaging, safe food preparation, presentation and handling, re-use and recycling) and ensure holistic planning and design, transparency, accountability and policy integration.
35. **Raise awareness of food loss and waste** through targeted events and campaigns; identify focal points such as educational institutions, community markets, company shops and other solidarity or circular economy initiatives.
36. **Collaborate with the private sector along with research, educational and community-based organisations** to develop and review, as appropriate, municipal policies and regulations (e.g. processes, cosmetic and grading standards, expiration dates, etc.) to prevent waste or safely recover food and packaging using a “food use-not-waste” hierarchy.
37. **Save food by facilitating recovery and redistribution for human consumption of safe and nutritious foods**, if applicable, that are at risk of being lost, discarded or wasted from production, manufacturing, retail, catering, wholesale and hospitality.