



JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region

**HRM Accessibility Advisory Committee
Monday, April 14, 2025**

Presenters:

Leticia Smillie - Food Security & System, Community Safety, HRM
More Vail- Halifax Food Policy Alliance- Ecology Action Centre

HALIFAX



HALIFAX FOOD
POLICY ALLIANCE

What is JustFOOD?



The **JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region** is a long range strategy for working together towards a more healthy, just and resilient food system. It recommends actions to increase community food security, strengthen our local food system and grow food justice & sovereignty.

Origins

A decade+ of collaboration between Halifax Food Policy Alliance and HRM towards a healthy, just & resilient food system.

- Using research, evidence and insights of those with lived experience to inform action
- Supporting healthy change through influencing policy & coordinating action
- Convening partners & community and mobilizing food action & advocacy



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Dec 2019: **Halifax Regional Council** committed to co-leading a food strategy in partnership with the **Halifax Food Policy Alliance**, the **JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region.**

Collaboration & Collective Impact



Baxter Research Group
research/action/design



**Ecology
Action
Centre**



wijewinen



**Mi'kmaw Native
FRIENDSHIP CENTRE**



Public Health

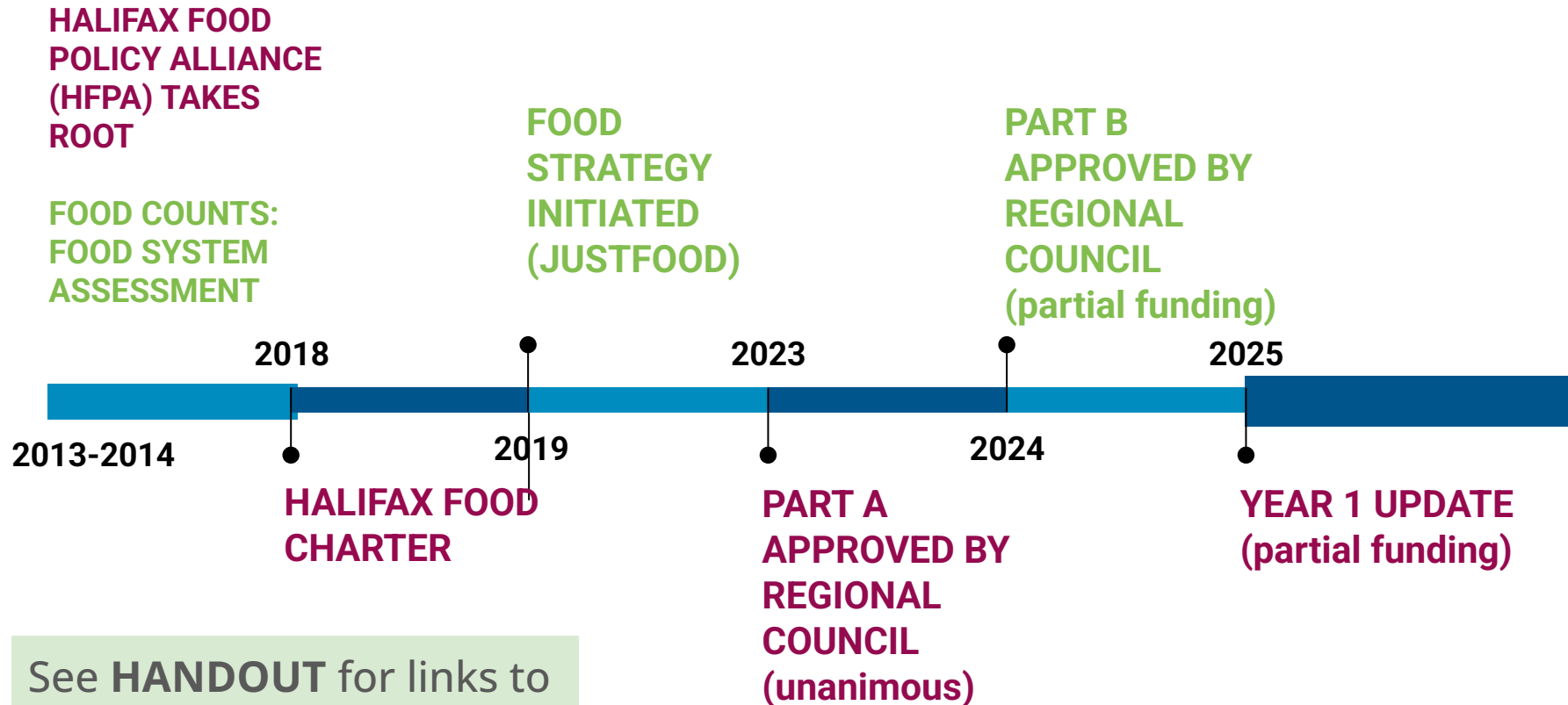
HALIFAX

Creating the JustFOOD Action Plan

- Built on Halifax Food Policy Alliance's previous work, including *Food Counts: Halifax Food Assessment* and *Halifax Food Charter*
- Using Innovation & Best Practices
 - grown in HRM plan built on research and learnings from other regions
- Based on extensive engagement with
 - residents, community-based organizations, provincial departments and HRM business units



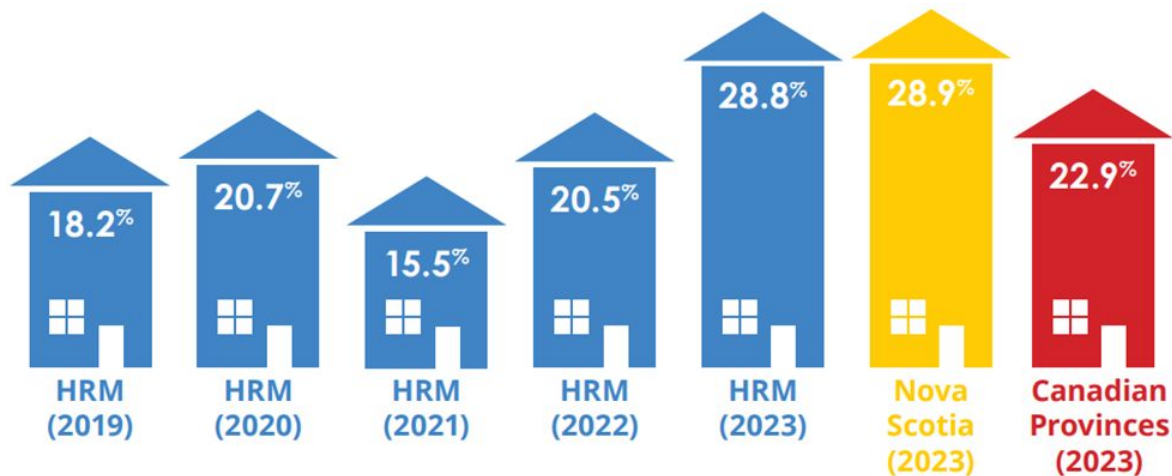
JustFOOD Milestones



See **HANDOUT** for links to documents & more detail

Greater Need for Collective Action

Percentage of Individuals Living in Food Insecure Households



References: Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey, Custom Tables for Halifax Census Metropolitan Area.
PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research. "New Data on household food insecurity in 2023."



in Black and Indigenous households
and households with children

Growing Capacity for Change

- **Community Based** with shift from “charity” to a localized food system with choice, dignity, and sovereignty over food
- **Regionally Focused** with advocacy for income supports, universal school food, resiliency across food system
- **Municipally Championed** with continued investment as Milan Pact signatory city, leaders in advancing community safety & resiliency, and on the ground seeing the impact
- **Collectively Advanced** while continuing to seek alignment with Provincial efforts and other food system actors across the Atlantic provinces and beyond

Part A



Governance



Social and Economic Equity



Food Production



Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution



Health, Wellness, and Resilience



Food Waste



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Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART A - MARCH 2023

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See **Handout** for excerpts from Part A & access full document on the **Timeline**

Part A: JustFOOD Disability Community Advisory

20. Promote food security in the disability community,*

- a. Advocate for reform to the Disability Support Program- ^ # of hours for workers for meal prep;
- b. Work with lived-experience to increase accessibility of existing/proposed municipal food services and programs;
- c. Design and implement inclusive food-assistance programs & raise awareness about existing food-security and nutrition programs and services;
- d. Support food distribution strategies to persons with limited mobility including funding for free/subsidized food prep & delivery programs
- e. Promote the role of persons with disabilities in sustainable food production & empower persons to engage in agriculture,
- f. Create training to ensure access to food and nutrition for persons with disabilities plus training to ensure food & nutritional needs of persons with disabilities for policy-makers, food assistance programs, private sector working in food system, health care professionals, and those working in institutions.

* drafted by the **Disability Community Advisory Group** & informed by public engagement + targeted engagements by reachAbility. Advisors and community members compensated for their time and knowledge.

Part B: YEAR 1 (2024/25) Priorities



**FORMALIZING
GOVERNANCE &
ESTABLISHING
COMMUNITY GRANT**



**GROWING MUNICIPAL
CAPACITY FOR ACTION**



**MAXIMIZING MUNICIPAL
ASSETS FOR FOOD ACCESS,
PRODUCTION,
& LITERACY**



**UNDERSTANDING FOOD
RESOURCES & COMMUNITY
VULNERABILITIES**



**STRENGTHENING
EMERGENCY FOOD
PLANNING**



**COLLABORATING
TOWARDS FOOD SYSTEM
CHANGE**

See handout for Part B Summary &
access full document on the Timeline



GROWING MUNICIPAL CAPACITY FOR ACTION

Investing in municipal capacity for action, required for:

- Municipal food lens,
- Municipal JustFOOD recommendations,
- Broader priorities i.e. emergency food response, homelessness, climate action, urban agriculture etc.

Key Updates

- 1 of 4 positions filled, 3 positions ready to post
- Community Resilience Working Group
- Food & Climate, Food & Encampments, & other internal collaborations





MAXIMIZING MUNICIPAL ASSETS FOR FOOD

Using assets for food production, distribution, & connections:

- Community Plots, Urban Orchards, & support for Community Gardens to grow urban agriculture
- Vermicomposting kits & Backyard Sharing to increase community capacity
- Inventory of municipal food programs & infrastructure

Key Updates

- Vermicomposting workshops
- Plots for seniors (Spencer House) & Pallet community
- Urban Orchard fruit tree training & engagement on Orchard expansion
- Community Gardens Grant Program & AO for Spring



COMMUNITY PLOTS

- increasing participation in urban food production through design & distribution of “ready made” & accessible community garden plots
- designed and prototyped raised & accessible garden plots that can be rolled out in other communities for 2025/26 (**if funded and staffed**)
- In 2024/25, advanced 5 new sites
 - Site 1-3: The Oasis “Aging In Place” Program- growing space for Seniors
 - Site 4: Growing space at the Atlantic Street Pallet Shelter Community
 - Site 5: Farrell Street Park engagement towards an urban farm Urban Farm



Advances JustFOOD Recommendation 20:

increasing accessibility, designed for inclusivity, & empowers participation in agriculture



STRENGTHENING EMERGENCY FOOD PLANNING

Increasing capacity to include food in emergency planning & response through:

- Emergency food truck to bring surplus food into communities (Second Harvest) & support the Emergency Management Office during events
- Investment & prototype community food infrastructure that could also support emergency response
- Stockpiling & collaborative responses

Key Updates

- Emergency Food Truck Coordinator
- Bids & Tenders for emergency food partners
- Stormkit funding & development of emergency pantries
 - Off Grid Cold Storage
- Community Food Distribution Pilot





FORMALIZING GOVERNANCE & ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY GRANTS

Creating the foundations to implement JustFOOD and grow food sovereignty:

- Halifax Food Council (HFC)
- Virtual Food Hub & JustFOOD Monitoring Framework
- Community Food Grants
- ANSB Coordinator, Advisory, & Pilots
- Mi'kmaw Coordinator & Advisory

Key Updates:

- JustFOOD ANSB & Mi'kmaw Coordinators hired + offering programs
- HFC roles, relationships, Terms of Reference defined
- \$130K in grants to community organizations through partnership with FeedNS
- JustFOOD Monitoring Framework





UNDERSTANDING FOOD RESOURCES & COMMUNITY VULNERABILITIES

Working together to better understand vulnerabilities and inform action through:

- Critical food infrastructure (HRVA)
- Halifax Food Asset Map
- Partnerships with researchers, community organizations, networks of food actors, Province, and others

Key Updates:

- Dataset of food outlets, community gardens, food programs & other food resources
- NS Health Atlas (Public Safety), United Way's Profiles
- Community Food Network, Milan Food Policy Pact, Common Ground Research, Atlantic Food Action Coalition, National Zero Waste Council





COLLABORATING TOWARDS FOOD SYSTEM CHANGE

Working together on bigger issues & opportunities in the food system, focusing on:

- Shift from charitable food to dignified access
- Increased access to local food & support for local producers
- Welcome & connection to supports for HRM migrant workers

Key Updates:

- FeedNS social supermarket & rural delivery pilots
- Halifax Regional Food Hub: Co-op, ED, & \$900K funds
- Centre for Migrant Workers' Rights NS pilots
- School Food



Year 1 Update- Info Report to Regional Council



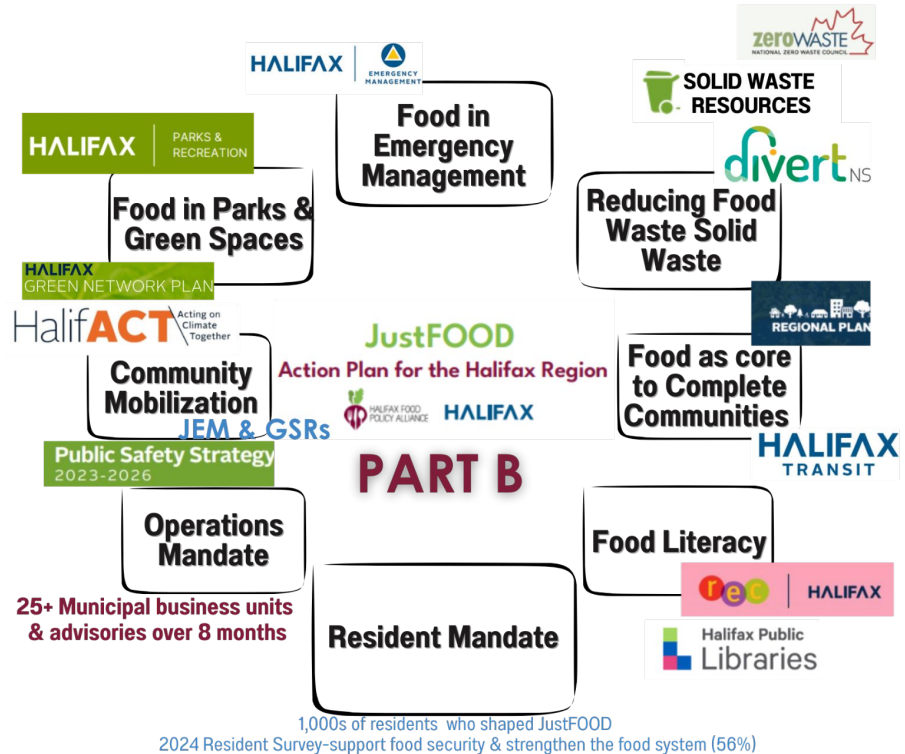
Photo credit: Terrel Daniel Photography

Initial work to implement JustFOOD in 2024/25 has:

- Strengthened Municipal capacity
- Supported community food action
- Increased community capacity for action
- Progressed food system governance and collective capacity
- Advanced innovative, community-driven food solutions
- Leveraged municipal investment for + \$508,000 (direct) & \$150,000 (in-kind) funding

Challenges to Implementation

**Reduced funding and hiring
delays & challenges =
slower implementation**



**Struggled to Gain new Council support for Municipal
role & seed funding for JustFOOD**

Next Steps

Providing clarification to Regional Council on priorities for 2025/26 funding, **if approved** :

- Hiring & formally establishing Halifax Food Council and Municipal Food Team
- Launching Programs
- Continuing to diversify funding & support
- Engaging with external partners & supporting community food action
- **Identifying priorities for Year 2 (2025/26) & progress disability community and other recommendations!**





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www.justfoodhalifax.ca

