

DATE: June 4, 2019

FILE: 0530-20

TO: Chair and Directors
Committee of the Whole

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

RE: Comox Valley Food Policy Council

Purpose

To provide information concerning the proposed creation of a Comox Valley Food Policy Council (CVFPC).

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

1. THAT the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) endorse the formation of the Comox Valley Food Policy Council (CVFPC) and direct staff to identify opportunities for collaboration with the CVFPC, once established, in support of CVRD services and strategic priorities and provide in-kind assistance as requested by the CVFPC (i.e. provision of meeting space).
2. THAT Electoral Area Director _____ (appointee) and Electoral Area Director _____ (alternate) representing the Comox Valley Regional District be appointed to the Comox Valley Food Policy Council for the remainder of the 2018 - 2022 term of office;

AND FURTHER THAT remuneration and expenses be paid provided remuneration and/or expenses are not paid directly by the external organization.

Executive Summary

- In follow up to the March 12, 2019 delegation from the Lush Valley Food Action Society, the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board passed a resolution at the April 30, 2019 meeting providing support in-principle for the concept of a CVFPC and directing staff to report back with further information.
- Staff have engaged with Maurita Prato, Executive Director, Lush Valley Food Action Society, to discuss the council's establishment and potential points of partnership and collaboration with the CVRD.
- The CVFPC is proposed as an independent, non-governmental body and as such, is not being approached as a CVRD service or advisory committee at this time. The CVFPC would be administratively delivered/supported by the Lush Valley Food Action Society. Appointments of a member and alternate representing the CVRD Electoral Areas is proposed.
- Food Policy Councils are relatively commonplace throughout much of the province and across the country, providing a forum for community and food system stakeholders to work collaboratively to examine the operation of the local food system and provide ideas and policy recommendations for how it can be improved.
- The Terms of Reference for the CVFPC is provided for information (Appendix A).

- The formation of a local Food Policy Council has the potential to provide significant value and synergies with CVRD and other local government initiatives including, but not limited to, food security, sustainability, solid waste management, water supply, emergency planning, economic development, local area land use planning and Regional Growth Strategy (RGS).
- Formal arrangements for funding and other support of the CVFPC has not been solidified. A total grant-in-aid of \$10,000 has been provided for 2019 from Electoral Area B (Function 121), and Electoral Area C (Function 122). Through collaboration with staff and reporting to the CVRD and other local governments, further consideration of a framework for stable funding and other support of the CVFPC is anticipated.

Prepared by:

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Stakeholder Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

Lush Valley Food Action Society	✓
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Background/Current Situation

At the April 30, 2019 meeting, the CVRD Board passed the following resolution:

THAT the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board support in principle the concept of a Comox Valley Food Policy Council (CVFPC);

AND FINALLY THAT the CVRD collaborate with the CVFPC in regards to its establishment with the terms of reference and other matters such as funding and in-kind support being brought back for board consideration.

Following the Board’s direction in April, staff engaged with Maurita Prato, Executive Director, Lush Valley Food Action Society, to discuss the council’s establishment and potential points of partnership and collaboration with the CVRD.

While the Comox Valley possesses a very active and engaged agricultural sector highlighted by the existence of two farmers’ institutes and a firmly established farmers’ market, a formal food policy council has not been established. As opposed to representing only food producers, food policy councils serve to bring together stakeholders from across the entire food system, including educators, processors, regulators, distributors and others, to examine the local food system and provide ideas, actions, and policy recommendations on how to improve it. While food systems are not a typical local government service or regulatory realm, food is implicated in land use planning, waste management, emergency planning, transportation, and many other government influenced and controlled areas.

Food policy councils have been established in many regions throughout the province, including: qathet, Squamish-Lillooet, Thompson Nicola, Okanagan, Kootenays and Metro Vancouver. These and other councils are operated under a variety of structures or models of governance ranging from being directly embedded within a local government to operating completely independently.

As outlined in their March 12, 2019 delegation to the Committee of the Whole, the CVFPC is being proposed as a “Category 3” hybrid model, with independent status but indirect links to Comox Valley local governments. An excerpt from the report entitled “Municipal Food Policy Entrepreneurs – Forms of Municipal Food Policy Activity” is provided in Appendix C of this report which details this model and the other categories of Food Policy Council structures.

The proposed structure means that the CVFPC would have no formal attachment to the CVRD or other local governments but instead have ongoing linkages with local government staff and elected officials. Local government representation on the CVFPC would be maintained and periodic informal assignment of staff resources would be provided where services and projects aligned.

A total grant-in-aid of \$10,000 has been provided for 2019 from Electoral Area B (Function 121), and Electoral Area C (Function 122) for the CVFPC. As the CVFPC would be administratively delivered by the Lush Valley Food Action Society, it is understood that the society has and will continue to be advancing grant applications in support of the CVFPC. Ongoing funding is acknowledged as a common challenge for Food Policy Councils established under this structure. Through collaboration with staff and reporting to the CVRD and other local governments, further consideration of a framework for stable funding and other support of the CVFPC is anticipated.

With respect to activities of the CVFPC, the attached (Appendix A) Terms of Reference describes the proposed goals, as well as planning, reporting and outreach. Potential activities include: public education, research, food system assessments, local government policy recommendation, food program coordination and advocacy. The CVFPC Background and Proposed Timeline document is provided in Appendix B and also references potential collaboration and work on CVRD specific initiatives, such as the Comox Valley Sustainability Strategy score-card and RGS objectives. These matters are discussed further in the latter part of this part.

As an independent organization, the CVFPC would not rely on local government referrals of food-related projects or other agricultural matters but operate more proactively on issues and matters it deems of importance. Such work may result in recommendations to the CVRD and other Comox Valley local governments that inform and enable policy development and implementation concerning matters within their respective jurisdiction.

Policy Analysis

Board policies allow for the appointment of regional district representatives to external organizations. In context of this report, representation on the CVFPC is deemed to be beneficial to the board as it allows for connectivity between the board and the council and its diverse members. In addition to political representation, informal staff connection to and support of the CVFPC is important when policy issues or projects align between the CVFPC and a local government.

Options

Options available are as follows:

1. Receive this staff report and take no action.
2. Endorse the formation of the CVFPC and appoint a director (staff recommendation).
3. Receive this staff report and direct an alternative action or request.

Financial Factors

As the CVFPC is proposed to be established as an independent, non-governmental body and is not being approached as a CVRD service or advisory committee, there are no direct financial impacts associated with this report at this time.

Limited staff time is anticipated to be contributed periodically in support of projects and initiatives that are of shared interest to both the CVRD and the CVFPC. Examples of such work includes: information sharing, delivery of presentations and support of grant applications.

The CVRD may also contribute in-kind support, such as meeting space. The boardroom and other CVRD owned meeting spaces may be utilized provided that a staff member or elected official attends the meeting.

Legal Factors

Board appointments to external organizations are generally at the discretion of the Board and further enabled by Board policy.

The Conflict of Interest Exceptions Regulations have limited the legal risks associated with elected representatives being appointed by their respective local governments to external bodies. The regulation generally provides that elected officials are not in a pecuniary conflict simply by virtue of their appointment when discussing and voting on matters concerning the society or corporation at their respective meetings. Board appointments to external organizations should still be considered with caution and with relevance to the corporate strategic priorities to avoid potential issues.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

The RGS identifies support for, and enhancement of, the agriculture and aquaculture sectors and local food security as a core policy area (Goal 6, Food Systems). Based on the suggested terms of reference (Appendix A), a food policy council could serve to assist in achieving the food-related objectives of the RGS through public education initiatives, advocacy work, and the provision of “subject matter expert” feedback on relevant local government policy and program initiatives. Information and data collected by the Food Policy Council could also feed into the CVRD’s planned efforts to evaluate and monitor progress on food-related RGS objectives.

Intergovernmental Factors

As an independent, non-governmental body, the CVFPC is able to work collaboratively with the CVRD and all of its member municipalities. Establishing such arrangements is the responsibility of the Lush Valley Food Action Society and the CVFPC once it’s established.

Interdepartmental Involvement

Corporate Services and Planning and Development Services have collaborated in the development of this staff report.

Citizen/Public Relations

None.

Attachments: Appendix A – Comox Valley Food Policy Council Terms of Reference
 Appendix B – Comox Valley Food Policy Council Background and Proposed
 Timeline
 Appendix C – Excerpt from Municipal Food Policy Entrepreneurs – Forms of
 Municipal Food Policy Activity

Terms of Reference for the Comox Valley Regional Food Policy Council- May, 2019

Draft Vision:

By 2040, across the Comox Valley Regional District our food system will be economically viable and ecologically sustainable; our community will grow, harvest, process, preserve, and distribute the majority of food for its members while eliminating waste. All members of the Comox Valley will have access to, and the knowledge to prepare healthy local foods and have access to enough nutritious, safe, ecologically sustainable, and culturally appropriate food at all times.

Format:

The Comox Valley Regional Food Policy Council (CVFPC) is a Hybrid Model with Indirect Links to Government (Category 3 in Municipal Food Policy Entrepreneurs by MacRae and Donahue, 2013, pg. 10 http://www.ensser.org/fileadmin/files/2013_MacRae%26Donahue.pdf).

These food policy initiatives are a hybrid of civil society organizations and government (not an official committee of Comox Valley Regional District) with significant linkages to local government via departments and government staff, with financial support from a mix of sources.

This format allows us the benefit of blending municipal and civil society organization resources (i.e. funding, additional regional and national support) and expertise, and allows for a more flexible agenda.

Examples of communities that use this model are Kamloops, BC and Hamilton, ON and Squamish BC <http://www.squamishfoodpolicycouncil.com/>. And Kamloops website here: <http://kamloopsfoodpolicycouncil.com/>

- The Food Policy Council is its own entity (not a committee of a municipal or regional government)
- The Food Policy Council provides input to all 4 municipal/regional governments and staff about issues of concern (and to K'òmoks First Nation if requested)

- The Food Policy Council considers any matters which may be referred to the Policy Council by local, regional or K'òmoks First Nation
- The Food Policy Council may take positions on policy initiatives from other levels of government within the mandate of the Policy Council

The proposed goals of the CVFPC support the processes and goals outlined in the CVRD BOD Priority Chart for 2019/2022. The CVFPC is interested in providing input into the Regional Growth Strategy and the Comox Valley Sustainability Strategy

Planning, reporting and outreach:

The Policy Council:

- Produces an annual work plan with specific objectives by no later than April of each year, in consultation with CVRD and local government representatives.
- Submits an annual report to the CVRD describing its accomplishments for the year, including reference to each objective set out in their annual work plan and any arising issues to which the Policy Council has responded
- Works co-operatively with other agencies whose activities affect constituent communities, including initiating and developing relevant projects.
- Acts as a resource for staff doing public involvement processes and civic events.
- Exchanges information with the constituent communities and the general public about relevant programs and issues of interest
- Engages in outreach to disseminate information and encourage participation from constituent communities
- May supports groups developing projects to enhance the food system

Membership:

- Members must endorse the vision, priorities and goals of the Council and have skills, knowledge, experience or a genuine interest in at least one area of food system. Areas of focus include but are not limited to: Food Security, Local Food Economy, Food Literacy and Food Systems Education.

Membership Structure:

LUSH Valley will have one staff position to help coordinate and administer the Council.

The CVFPC will include a minimum of 10 and no more than 18 members that represent diversity across the food system, as well as local government representatives. Each member is asked to commit to a 2 year term on the Council.

- Komoks First Nation (1 position)
- CVRD Director (1 position)
- City of Courtenay (1 position)
- Town of Comox (1 Position)
- Village of Cumberland (1 position)
- Food distributor/larger food retailer (1 position)
- Mid Island Farmers Institute (1 position)
- Comox Valley Farmers Institute (1 position)
- Community (This could include a member of CVEDS and/or members of the planning community and/or individual from seniors organization up to 4 positions)
- Vancouver Island Health Authority or Community Health Network (1 position)
- Youth (1 positions)
- Food Charity (1 positions)
- Local food business (1 position)
- School District 71 or NIC (1 position)
- Lush Valley (1 position)

The Council's membership should reflect the Comox Valley's diverse population, including, but not limited to, ethno-racial, faith, gender, mental ability, physical ability, literacy/educational level, age, sexual orientation, rural/urban residency and socioeconomic circumstances.

Meeting frequency:

The Policy Council meets at *_(location TBD)_*, but not more than 12 times a year.

Currently, the Policy Council meets on *(date TBD)_* of each month at *(time TBD)_* pm in the.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meetings.

Time commitment

Outside of meetings, members should expect to spend at least 2 hours on email and other correspondence, report writing, and background reading. Preparation time for all meetings is required.

Attendance requirement

Members may miss no more than four consecutive meetings without obtaining leave of absence from the Policy Council. Membership will be terminated following the fourth such absence.

Comox Valley Food Policy Council (CVFPC) Background and Proposed Timeline

Last updated: May 26th, 2019

What is Food Policy?

A food policy is any decision, program or project that is endorsed by a government agency, business, or organization which affects how food is produced, processed, distributed, purchased, protected and disposed of. Food policy operates at the global, national, provincial, regional, local and institutional levels. World Trade Organization regulations, welfare policies, farm subsidies and labelling standards are some examples of higher-level policies that influence the food system.

At the local and municipal level, examples of food policies include:

- The regulatory requirements placed on someone planning to open a food-based business;
- Food purchasing decisions of institutional buyers and how they relate to the use of locally produced items;
- Amending bylaws to support urban agriculture (i.e. greenhouses and farm stands)

What is a Food Policy Council?

Food Policy Councils (FPCs) are comprised of individuals from all aspects of a local food system. A Food Policy Council is an innovative collaboration between citizens and government officials. The goal is to provide a forum for advocacy and policy development that works towards the creation of a food system that is ecologically sustainable, economically viable and socially just. The primary goal of many Food Policy Councils is to examine the operation of a local food system and provide ideas and policy recommendations for how it can be improved.

Proposed Timeline:

Throughout: Exploring funding strategies (e.g. collaborating with other organizations and levels of government) and organizational fundraising to support the coordination of the CVFPC and to increase staff capacity for food system planning and coordination at the local government level.

Spring of 2019:

1. Prior to Spring 2019- consultation with food policy and food policy council leaders across the province, engagement with local food systems leaders regarding the formation of a CVFPC.
2. Delegations to local, regional and First Nations governments

3. Obtaining support in principal from CVRD BOD to move forward with the development of a Comox Valley Regional Food Policy Council (CVFPC).
4. Creating a draft Terms of Reference (TOR) and background documents for the proposed CVFPC, presented to the CVRD BOD for comment.
5. Integrated comments and finalized working TOR and timeline documents to be used in report to CVRD BOD.
6. Consulting with Food Policy Councils across BC to choose best practices for recruitment and vetting of members.

Summer of 2019:

Recruitment and vetting of CVFPC members, as follows:

The CVFPC will include a minimum of 10 and no more than 18 members that represent diversity across the food system, as well as local government representatives. Each member is asked to commit to a 2 year term on the Council.

- Komoks First Nation (1 position)
- CVRD Director (1 position)
- City of Courtenay (1 position)
- Town of Comox (1 Position)
- Village of Cumberland (1 position)
- Food distributor/larger food retailer (1 position)
- Mid Island Farmers Institute (1 position)
- Comox Valley Farmers Institute (1 position)
- Community (This could include a member of CVEDS and/or members of the planning community and/or individual from seniors organization up to 4 positions)
- Vancouver Island Health Authority or Community Health Network (1 position)
- Youth (1 positions)
- Food Charity (1 positions)
- Local food business (1 position)
- School District 71 or NIC (1 position)
- Lush Valley (1 position)

Fall 2019:

2. Launching the CVFPC- public announcement and first meeting
3. Revisiting the CVFPC Terms of Reference and Priorities of the first year of the CVFPC
4. Provide feedback and reporting to support the development of a score-card for the Food System section of the Comox Valley Sustainability Strategy.
5. Provide input and guidance on the agriculture and food strategy as requested

6. Annual reporting to local level governments and publicly on the accomplishments of the CVFPC

2020 (some items may continue ongoing or beyond 2020):

1. Review and create a resource report on the best policies and practices that other communities have implemented to increase local food production.
2. Undertake a comprehensive food system assessment to identify assets, ways to increase production capacity and overall food security issues
3. Within the Regional Growth Strategy planning process and as part of Official Community Plan reviews, develop parallel policies to manage growth and preserve farmland for farming with a focus on food production farming (through appropriate mechanisms for feedback or as these planning processes open up).
4. Additional priorities as identified by members of the CVFPC and/or local governments (including K'òmoks First Nation)
5. Advises Council and staff on a Comox Valley Food Strategy as it is developed, implemented and updated.

Regional Guiding Documents and Food Security and Sustainability:

Regional Growth Strategy:

Overall Objective: To support and enhance the agricultural and aquaculture sectors and increase local food security.

1. Objective 6-A: Protect land for existing and future agriculture and associated activities and allow for the growth and expansion of such activities.
2. Objective 6-B: Protect shoreline areas for existing and future aquaculture and associated activities
3. Objective 6-C: Improve and expand agricultural irrigation practices and infrastructure
4. Objective 6-D: Increase farming activity in the Comox Valley
5. Objective 6-E: Raise awareness of the regional importance of the local food system

Comox Valley Sustainability Strategy local food production targets:

Objective 6.1.1: Increase the personal and commercial production of local food for local consumption.

TARGET: % of fresh produce consumed in the Comox Valley that is produced in the region: 2020 ~ 25%

2030 ~ 40%; 2040 ~ 55%; 2050 ~ 60%

TARGET: % of dairy consumed in the Comox Valley that is produced in the region:
2020 ~ 100%

TARGET: % of protein (beef, pork, venison, poultry, bison, seafood, eggs, dairy, nuts and vegetable based protein) consumed in the Comox Valley that is produced in the region: 2020 ~ 25%; 2030 ~ 33%; 2040 ~ 40%; 2050 ~ 45%

Comox Valley Sustainability Strategy and the formation of a CVFPC:

The formation of a CVFPC is the first action listed in the food security section of the CVSS. The suggestion is that the CVRD and local municipal governments are in the best position to take the lead in implementing the CVFPC.

“a. In partnership with local community organizations, the CVEDS, establish a Comox Valley Food Policy Council (CVFPC) to lead the work on a sustainable food system in a multi-stakeholder manner. The CVFPC would be the central coordinating agency across governments, other agencies and community groups to lead the development of food strategies, research on food issues, connecting food stakeholders and other roles. Local governments need to allocate basic initial funding until the CVFPC can establish its own sources of funding.”

Draft

SIX FORMS OF MUNICIPAL FOOD POLICY ACTIVITY

The level of municipal food policy activity across the country surpassed our expectations. The diversity of initiatives is exceptional. Using academic literature, website reviews, surveys of organizational leaders, and phone interviews, we have categorized this diverse activity in the following six ways⁵ (Figure 2). Table 1 summarizes our findings and we have posted

a full analysis at www.tfpc.to/canadian-food-policy-initiatives. Our categorization is primarily organized around the differences, often nuanced, in the structural and resourcing arrangements food policy groups have with local and regional governments. The nuances, however, appear to have an impact on successes and challenges, as we explain later in the report.

■ CATEGORY 1 MUNICIPALITY-DRIVEN FOOD POLICY INITIATIVES

These food policy initiatives are financed by the municipality and directed by municipal staff with advice from external groups. The municipal government sets the mandate and provides financing and staff resources. They are housed within existing municipal government units and external organizations advise and interact with municipal officials.

We found three projects in this category: two in Alberta (Edmonton and Calgary) and one in Metro Vancouver. These are relatively new initiatives, and when we were conducting our survey, they were still

EXAMPLE: EDMONTON FRESH- LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City of Edmonton's Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy (called fresh) focuses on building local food supply, infrastructure, and demand. The goal is a stronger, more vibrant local economy, with food policy and food programs designed to support that goal (www.edmonton.ca/city_government/urban_planning_and_design/food-and-agriculture-project.aspx). It proposes a mix of regulatory policies and food programs, including planning initiatives to protect food-producing lands; the creation of food hubs that include commercial kitchens; improved market, warehouse and storage infrastructure; a local food purchasing policy; a local food festival; a local labelling scheme; and new mobile food, retail and restaurant infrastructure.

rolling out their implementation mechanisms, including food system assessments, charters, action plans, and formal entities to oversee execution of the agenda.

They were created by municipal governments, but influenced by multi-stakeholder groups. The initiatives all reflect a broad food systems approach, driven by concerns about sustainability. Funding and staffing are largely provided by the municipal or regional governments. Although it is too early to know what their impacts will be, they already have some political champions and resources, with the engagement of many units within their jurisdictions.

■ CATEGORY 2

HYBRID MODEL WITH DIRECT LINKS TO GOVERNMENT

These food policy initiatives are a hybrid of civil society organizations and government with a conduit to decision makers through municipal council, and with municipal financing, political champions, and supportive staff. They are characterized by formal municipal endorsements, structural links, and accountability to a government body, including a conduit into the municipal government structure.

In this category are three initiatives in the cities of Toronto, Vancouver, and Markham, Ontario. The Toronto Food Policy Council is more than 20 years old, and was recently instrumental in shaping the Toronto Food Strategy which facilitates food systems connections across city departments, and between municipal government and community. Markham created its food policy in 2011, with a focus on institutional food procurement.

EXAMPLE: CITY OF VANCOUVER FOOD STRATEGY

Crafted by city staff and the Vancouver Food Policy Council, the City of Vancouver's Food Strategy was adopted by City Council at the end of January 2013. Rooted in other municipal strategies and policy frameworks, but displaying a strong food system lens, the strategy focuses on neighbourhood-based initiatives to increase "food assets." Importantly, the strategy serves as a backbone for a comprehensive food systems program that is fully integrated into multiple City programs and managed by City staff today. Equally notable and unique, the strategy is intended to enhance the regional foodshed, extending beyond the City's boundary, and strongly advocates food system change at the provincial and federal levels. The strategy recognizes that effective governance of the food system involves government, civil society, and individual citizens. At the same time, Metro Vancouver (the regional level of government) has developed and adopted a food strategy and is reviewing regulations to make sure they support local food production and procurement. Vancouver's food strategy is intended to complement and build upon the regional strategy, but still be specific to the City of Vancouver.

Typically, these initiatives were intended to address issues of access to affordable food for low-income residents; sustainability concerns (including reducing climate change impacts); and the economic viability of regional agriculture. Their main challenges include fluctuating support from municipal councils, problems with resourcing, and lack of time to implement their agendas. The older initiatives appeared to have the most significant impact,⁶ because food policy agendas take time to develop. Based on the breadth of their memberships and agendas, and from comments we heard in our interviews, we have concluded that they have a food systems focus.

Many of these initiatives have been described in the academic literature and are widely viewed as a preferred structure for a food policy organization because of the way they blend municipal and civil society organization resources and expertise (e.g., Harper et al., 2009; Schiff, 2007; Scherb et al., 2012).

■ CATEGORY 3 HYBRID MODEL WITH INDIRECT LINKS TO GOVERNMENT

Like Category 2, these food policy initiatives are a hybrid of civil society organizations and government, but with fewer formal attachments and lower levels of financing and government staffing arrangements. The conduit to council is less direct, via departments and government staff. The linkages with government are still significant, but less so than for Category 2. Public health structures and staffing are particularly important, with financial support from a mix of sources, including provincial grants.

In this category, we found 14 projects in British Columbia and Ontario, including ones in Kamloops, B.C., and Waterloo Region and Hamilton, Ontario. Most had a regional scope and were created by civil society organizations, sometimes in partnership with local or regional public health units. The motives for their creation were broad, but usually related to social development or health. Several projects had led to the development of food charters.

Links to government were less direct, and depended largely on participating municipal staff or councillors. Staff support was more likely to be the formal or informal assignment of the time of a municipal employee

than the direct financing of dedicated staff positions. Half had some dedicated municipal funding, while others survive on a mix of provincial governmental and external grants and volunteer time.

EXAMPLE: HAMILTON, ONTARIO, COMMUNITY GARDEN COORDINATOR

Excerpt from a report submitted by the Medical Officer of Health to City Council on December 12, 2011: "Hiring a Community Garden Coordinator helped community gardens flourish in Hamilton in 2011. There are now over 30 community gardens - 20 of which sit on Hamilton Housing properties." According to Sarah Wakefield, University of Toronto researcher and past Chair of the Hamilton Community Food Security Stakeholder Advisory Committee, the City of Hamilton is starting to realize how many resources it can leverage through the community garden position. "For \$15,000 you can get donations from Home Depot and hundreds of hours of donations in time. You can beautify derelict spaces. You can engage community members in their communities in ways you couldn't do before. You can reduce the cost of existing community gardens to the city, because now they don't operate allotment-style. These are some of the things the Community Garden Coordinator does for this very small investment. We need to move away from the mindset that this is an unwarranted expense to recognizing all the resources this position can leverage. It's a bargain."

As with the initiatives in Category 2, membership in these groups was diverse and frequently included government representatives. The challenges these groups faced were more pronounced, however, especially securing funding and maintaining staff and continuity. Impacts were often more project-specific, such as the creation of farmers' markets, the development of food box projects, or the establishment of community gardens. Compared to Categories 1 and 2, food systems approaches were still common, but more limited⁷.

■ CATEGORY 4

FOOD POLICY ORGANIZATION LINKED TO GOVERNMENT THROUGH A SECONDARY AGENCY

These food policy initiatives are not formally connected to government, but linked through secondary agencies. They may have important ties to government (such as a municipally endorsed food charter) or receive some government grants.

In this category, we found 15 projects in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Quebec, including ones based in Victoria, Saskatoon, Ottawa, and Montreal. Most have regional responsibilities and were largely started by civil society organizations, sometimes with the engagement of government staff.

EXAMPLE: OTTAWA, ONTARIO, JUST FOOD

Just Food was started in 2000 and has taken various forms since then. It is largely driven by civil society organizations and has operated structurally for much of its life through the city's Social Planning Council. Just Food has proven its value to the municipality by delivering programs that the municipality supports but cannot implement, and a more formal relationship with the City of Ottawa is consequently emerging. Just Food has developed an action plan and is now working to establish a multidimensional Community Food and Urban Agriculture Hub on a National Capital Commission farm property. To achieve its progressive environmental and social agenda, Just Food sees its role as negotiating amongst governmental, corporate, and private actors.

The motive for their creation is typically quite specific: addressing hunger, overcoming barriers to food access, or promoting healthy eating, although a few have wider food system concerns. Some have created municipal food charters, although these charters may not be endorsed by the municipal government.

Their connections to government are largely through committees, agencies such as social planning councils, or provincially mandated organizations. Many did not have staff or had only some part-time staffing support, sometimes through another agency. Staff and money are clear limiting constraints on their growth and effectiveness.

■ CATEGORY 5

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION WITH LIMITED GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND PARTICIPATION

This type of food policy organization consists of a civil society organization roundtable or project committee, on which government officials may participate. The organization may receive some government grants.

In this category, we found 16 initiatives⁸ primarily in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec, including those based in Kaslo, B.C., Sudbury, Ontario, and the Outaouais region of Quebec.

Despite limited resources and staffing, they have local visibility and have managed to enact some projects with some success. Several have created food charters, and secured municipal endorsement for these charters.

The motives for their creation are diverse, but usually focused on specific goals, such as maintaining the viability of local farms or ensuring food security for low-income populations. A wide range of

EXAMPLE: KASLO, BRITISH COLUMBIA, FOOD SECURITY PROJECT

Kaslo has a food hub, which offers nine programs. The organization developed a food charter that has been endorsed by the municipal government. The project conducts community food assessments, and has created policies and procedures for operating food hubs, community gardening guidelines, and a food directory. It is currently writing a guide on community food security for rural communities, working on waste recovery, and creating a community greenhouse with a local arena. The organization is also trying to help the local farming sector by, for example, working on crown land acquisition, drawing up lease agreements, and writing a farm plan for a local farm organization.

organizations were involved in their creation, but typically with less government involvement than Categories 1 to 4.

In general, these initiatives are having difficulty making inroads with local governments, although many participants have connections to elected and unelected officials. There is some evidence of food systems thinking, but resource limitations suggest some difficulties with executing projects with system-wide scope. Some are trying to establish a Food Policy Council structured within the municipality.

■ CATEGORY 6

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS WITH NO DIRECT GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

These food policy initiatives are not formally connected to government and do not seem to partner with government or receive funding. The initiatives, however, are developing a clearer structure and the ability to engage regional government in food system change.

In this category, we found 13 projects, in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador. These initiatives have had some successes, although they are largely

EXAMPLE: CENTRAL OKANAGAN FOOD POLICY COUNCIL/SOCIETY

With roots in the region dating back to 2006, this organization has created a food charter for the region and implemented numerous successful community-based projects. At present, the organization operates without government involvement. It has begun making presentations to municipal councils in the region. A former Councillor for the City of Kelowna is a member of the group and helped the group ensure that food security considerations were included in the city's Official Community Plan. Applications to both government and non-governmental funders have been unsuccessful to date.

unrecognized by local governments. Some have constructed charters and action plans, but these efforts have not substantially affected the work of government bodies. In British Columbia, however, provincial health authorities have often been significant supporters. Their resources are so limited that we had difficulty obtaining information on the projects.

TABLE 1 - CHARACTERIZING MUNICIPAL FOOD POLICY INITIATIVES

Note that these are soft boundaries between the categories; in the transition from one category to the next are initiatives that display characteristics of both.

	Characteristics	Number	Examples
STRONG MUNICIPAL SUPPORT	Cat. 1 - Initiative financed by municipality & directed by municipal staff with external groups advising	3	Edmonton, Calgary, Metro Vancouver
	Cat. 2 - CSO / government hybrid with conduit through municipal council & municipal financing, political champions and dedicated or supportive staff to implement strategies	3	City of Toronto, City of Vancouver, Markham (ON)
	Cat. 3 - Like Cat. 2, but without govt staff and financing; or conduit through departments and govt staff with in-kind financing	14	Huntsville (ON), Waterloo Region (ON), Kamloops (BC)
	Cat. 4 - Conduit to decision makers through "secondary" agencies and their staff, some grant financing from governments	15	Montreal, GTA Agricultural Action Committee (ON), Saskatoon
	Cat. 5 - Government officials sit on CSO roundtable or project committee, limited government funding and participation in implementation	16	Kaslo (BC), Sudbury (ON), Gatineau (QC)
WEAK SUPPORT	Cat. 6 - No direct government involvement	13	Okanagan (BC), Winnipeg, St. John's (NL)

FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

Municipal and regional food policy work is gaining momentum across Canada. In summary, the diversity of the 64 food policy initiatives captured in this assessment appears to be a function of local political and organizational conditions, including the scale and geography of the region and the current realities of poverty and food system function.

These initiatives began to appear in the early 1990s (see timeline page 16) and now cover most regions of the country (see map page 17). As in the United States (Harper et al., 2009), most of the initiatives have appeared since 2000, but especially in the first three categories, many mature initiatives date back to the 1990s.

The municipal food system

Municipalities have not undertaken food policy work to feed themselves. Such opportunities are limited (see MacRae et al., 2010). Rather, they are trying to shift the dynamics amongst food system actors to improve environmental sustainability, health promotion, and economic development. Some of these efforts shift realities within the municipality, many help municipalities realize their multiple goals, and others have wider regional effects.

A municipal food system has many of the dimensions of a larger area (e.g., province or nation) but the proportions of actors, activities and processes are different. Although the municipalities studied here are highly diverse, typically, food producers are involved, but

relatively few of them and mostly small-scale. Most farm input suppliers are small-town or rural. Canada's large food processors and distributors usually locate in large urban areas, although small and medium-sized processing firms are dispersed across a range of locations. Many municipalities actively work to retain their food processors and distributors because of the important economic development activity they bring.

Restaurants, work places, health care facilities, schools and institutes of higher learning are a large part of urban food systems and often equally significant for economic activity. Government agents and policy makers tend to be centralized in mid-sized and large communities, a change from the days in which they were based in smaller communities. Food system change activists also are largely urban.

Given population shifts, consumers are now primarily urban and suburban, so municipalities need to provide many food system functions, such as planning, social development, economic development, environment, parks and recreation, and public health services that focus on food

safety and nutritional health. Municipalities are also engaged in the direct provision of food to students and to children in daycare, as well as to residents in shelters of long-term care.

What were the municipal drivers?

For initiatives in Categories 1 to 3, there appears to have been at least one politically pressing local food problem (such as an increased reliance on food banks, health problems, or the loss of farmland) that stimulated initial interest. But given the kind of discussions that flow from multi-sectoral representation, the initiatives or groups came to recognize that one issue was connected to others in the food system.

It may not matter whether the initiative is driven by economic or social/health/community objectives, although public health units have been the most important supporters of these efforts, followed by planning, social, and economic development units within municipal governments. What is more important is whether the impetus created by one unit attracts support from other government units. This requires at least one strong champion.

Equally important appears to be how the food agenda can be tied to other municipal mandates. Categories 1 to 3 in particular, food activity is directly correlated to provincial or municipal government mandates. These include British Columbia's focus on healthy food; Vancouver's commitment to sustainability, Toronto's commitment to strong neighbourhoods, and commitments by other governments to address food insecurity. These commitments open up opportunities for civil society organizations to show governments how their action on food can help fulfil those other mandates.

In Categories 4 to 6, food policy initiatives are linked to municipal policies that are sometimes

less directly pertinent to food system change, although supportive municipal officials from public health, social development, and economic development may serve as members. In some cases, especially in British Columbia and Ontario, public health staff have been essential to what has emerged.

How do funding and budgets affect food initiatives?

Budget security can affect an organization's ability to implement a range of initiatives. Initiatives that are not funded by government face the dilemma of how to finance their own core function at the same time that their wider network of actors and their projects are also precariously financed.

Governments can spur the multiplier effect that comes from core financing of food initiatives. For example, between 1991 and 1998, the Toronto Food Policy Council, funded by the city at the rate of approximately \$220,000 a year, helped raise more than \$7 million dollars from other sources for community food projects. Since 2010, the Toronto Food Strategy has been able to attract funding from charitable foundations and the provincial government for multiple initiatives. The City of Vancouver has recently brokered a deal with the Vancouver Foundation to fund green initiatives, including projects that increase the supply of local food, in part inspired by the work of the Vancouver Food Policy Council. The City pays for one half of each new initiative and the foundation pays for the other half.

Food projects can be complex, with many partners involved, and progress can be slow. In general, the longer an organization has been in existence, the greater its impact. Initiatives with fewer direct links to municipal government and more tenuous funding struggle more with effectiveness than those with more direct links and supports.