

Tending the Garden



July 2003

Final report on implementing
The Growing Season
and recommended next steps

– **A report of the Food and Hunger Action Committee**

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Introduction

In March 2001, Toronto City Council demonstrated its commitment to food security by unanimously adopting the *Toronto Food Charter* as well as *The Growing Season*, an action plan for food security proposed by the Food and Hunger Action Committee.

The Growing Season represents an important milestone for the City of Toronto. It integrates diverse approaches from the former area municipalities into a shared vision of the new City's roles and responsibilities with respect to food security. It proposes achievable, affordable, innovative and creative approaches that can benefit everyone, while unifying Torontonians behind a set of shared values. And it reinforces the importance of partnerships by bringing together a wide variety of community groups and agencies from across Toronto to work with City Councillors and staff.

The Food and Hunger Action Committee celebrated the launch of the *Toronto Food Charter* and Toronto Public Health's Peer Nutrition Program at a public ceremony in June 2001. Featured were two of Canada's leading food security experts — Graham Riches of the University of British Columbia and Jennifer Welsh of Ryerson's Canadian Centre for Food Security — both of whom praised the City of Toronto for its leadership and vision.

We have had two busy years since the launch. The Food and Hunger Action Committee would like to present to Council and the community this report on implementing recommendations in *The Growing Season*. This report outlines what was achieved and what was not. It discusses some of the challenges to implementation, and recommends future City initiatives that build on the successes achieved thus far.

Toronto as a municipal leader in food security

Toronto is one of the first cities to assume a strong leadership role in the broad field of food security. Toronto's leadership has quickly gained the City international recognition. Cities across Canada and the United States are modeling their food charters and action plans on Toronto's. Requests for speakers from the City have come from many cities including Victoria, Vancouver, Prince George, Calgary, Sudbury, Kitchener, Waterloo, Ottawa, Baltimore, Washington and Seattle. City staff associated with the Food and Hunger Action Committee were also invited to join the Canadian delegation to the 2002 World Food Summit held in Rome. Since that time, staff have played a leading role on two international bodies — the Community Food Security Coalition, based in Los Angeles, and the International Planning Committee, based in Rome.

The partnerships

Partnerships were key to the success of implementing the recommendations of *The Growing Season*. At the political level, the five City Councillors of the Food and Hunger Action Committee provided leadership on food security issues.

Another key partner was the Community Reference Group, comprised of representatives of Hungerwatch, as well as other community-based food security networks and agencies. This group expanded and diversified its membership and mandate, and is now called the Food Justice Coalition. A subcommittee of the coalition worked with the Food and Hunger Action Committee and City staff on implementing *The Growing Season*. In addition, a subcommittee of the Toronto Food Policy Council worked on the recommendations directed to this group.

City staff in the Toronto Food Policy Council and the Social Development and Administration Division of Community and Neighbourhood Services led the co-ordination of the implementation plan. Building on the theme of cross-sectoral partnerships, an inter-departmental staff group was set up to carry out this work. This approach has fostered links across City departments, bringing staff together to identify ways to better co-ordinate and collaborate on food security initiatives. This is a significant achievement of the Food and Hunger Action Committee process — the recognition that food security is a cross-departmental, cross-sectoral issue that requires co-ordination within the City as well as with external partners.

The approach

The action plan set out in *The Growing Season* was not intended to solve every problem associated with hunger or food security. The plan was designed as a set of first steps, and practical and achievable measures that built on existing programs while nurturing new partnerships and opportunities.

The action plan was also designed to grow out of and with Canadian traditions of “population health” and “universal programs,” two important keys to why Canadian cities are North American success stories. In dealing with a desperate and urgent issue such as hunger, the pressure is to provide an immediate response to a narrowly targeted group, usually through a charity or emergency food program. Instead, the Food and Hunger Action Committee process was committed to working within the Canadian tradition that led to medicare and high-quality public schools by focusing on programs that benefit everyone.

The action plan was designed around win-win combinations that yield benefits for the community, the environment, the economy, public health, and also the City’s budget. Food security is good for Toronto’s integrity, cohesion and reputation as “the city that works,” which in turn attracts tourists and business. Everyone benefits when fresh, local food is available at vibrant farmers’ markets, lively main street grocery stores and picturesque community gardens.

It's good for the health of Torontonians and it's good for local farmers who protect local agricultural land — the best in the country — when they can make a living selling to nearby customers. It's good for the environment when food surpluses are put to good use instead of sent to a landfill, where the rot discharges methane that contributes to global warming. It's good for community development when local groups have the tools to make food security a centrepiece of a warm and hospitable neighbourhood. It's good for the economy to use our purchasing power to support innovative urban agriculture projects and local processing companies — Toronto is a leading centre of food processing on the continent — and it's also good for the environment when food doesn't have to be trucked in from far away.



The accomplishments

The Growing Season was released in February 2001 during a time when Toronto Council was experiencing significant budget pressures. The Food and Hunger Action Committee agreed to put the report's funding proposals on hold, and focus on implementing as many of the recommendations as possible using already-budgeted resources.

The majority of the recommendations in *The Growing Season* have been implemented. They focus on enhancing the City of Toronto's role in four key areas:

- 1) The City as an advocate for food security
- 2) The City as a co-ordinator of community-based food security initiatives
- 3) The City as a supporter of food programs and projects
- 4) The City as an innovator in food security.

The next section highlights key accomplishments in each of these four areas as well as food security initiatives that surpass the expectations of *The Growing Season*. A more detailed account on the outcome of each recommendation can be found in Appendix A.

The accomplishments highlighted below reflect the wide range of partnerships that have allowed this work to happen. They have involved community-based agencies and groups, other levels of government, the private sector, City Councillors and City staff. We would especially like to acknowledge the support of the Food Justice Coalition. This group has devoted considerable time and expertise to the City, which in turn has helped us to identify priorities, develop responsive policies and implement effective programs.

1. The City as advocate for food security

Municipal governments are limited in their ability to address systemic social issues such as poverty and the lack of affordable housing. The City of Toronto has made a commitment through its Strategic Plan and the Social Development Strategy to be a stronger advocate with senior levels of government in areas where the provincial and federal governments have a clear role, such as income security and housing.

The Growing Season emphasized the need for the City to take leadership by advocating with its community partners to other orders of government on key food security issues in Toronto. City initiatives taken in this area include:

- ☼ Urging the Province to **restore cuts and increase social assistance rates** to reflect inflation rates since 1995, to create a new shelter allowance program for the working poor, to increase the minimum wage, and to increase funding for rent supplements. In February 2003, the City endorsed the province-wide Pay the Rent and Feed the Kids campaign to increase social assistance benefits and reintroduce rent controls. The City also agreed to lend its name and resources to public education initiatives related to the campaign. On March 12, 2003, the City joined the Pay the Rent and Feed the Kids coalition to unveil a transit shelter poster campaign to promote this initiative across Toronto.
- ☼ Asking the Province to **stop deducting the National Child Benefit Supplement** from families receiving social assistance so families can keep this much-needed income.

- ☼ Lobbying the federal and provincial governments to get back into the business of **building affordable and supportive housing**, and to work together to ensure adequate funding for and timely delivery of the new federal Community Rental Housing program.



2. The City as co-ordinator of community-based food security initiatives

Partnering with volunteer and non-profit organizations is one way the City increases the capacity of our community to deal with food and hunger issues. *The Growing Season* recommended strategies whereby the City could help community groups to honour and to optimize their effectiveness. City action taken includes:

- ☼ Community and Neighbourhood Services initiated the annual **Food Action Awards** for Community Volunteers program to honour the outstanding contributions of volunteers working in community-based food security programs across Toronto. Thirty-one volunteers were honoured in the first awards ceremony in November 2001. In 2002, another 34 volunteers received awards from the City in the categories of Lifetime Achievement, Outstanding Achievement and Community Spirit.
- ☼ Parks and Recreation, in concert with Toronto Public Health, FoodShare and local community agencies, identified Flemingdon as an under-served neighbourhood interested in developing a special **community farmers' market** to increase local access to fresh, affordable and culturally acceptable food. Funding for this initiative was allocated under the City's Food and Hunger Action Fund (FHAF). Another farmers' market, led by community groups in the Parkdale area, also received funding under the FHAF.
- ☼ Toronto Food Policy Council and the Shelter, Housing and Support Division of Community and Neighbourhood Services are working with staff and residents of a Toronto Community Housing Corporation site to **increase access to food retail outlets** in the under-served Queen and Sherbourne community. The area recently lost its only grocery store.



3. The City as supporter of food programs and projects

The City supports many community-based food programs across Toronto. These programs make an enormous difference in the lives of many people. They also help to build the capacity of individuals and communities. Because of this two-fold importance, *The Growing Season* recommended more support for these types of initiatives. The City was able to increase its support for a number of community projects when:

- ☀ Community & Neighbourhood Services created a \$750,000 **Food and Hunger Action Fund** approved under the 2002 Ontario Works Incentive Fund. This one-time fund was targeted to capital or short-term initiatives in community-based food programs that assist disadvantaged and/or high-risk communities. The community submissions reflect the depth of food insecurity in Toronto, the range of organizations that are working on these issues, and the creative approaches available to address them. A total of 49 food security projects were funded across Toronto. Twenty-six worthwhile projects could not be funded simply due to lack of funds. An additional \$425,000 would have been needed.
- ☀ Toronto Public Health received \$27,0000 under the 2002 Ontario Works Incentive Fund to pilot a summer program **employing high school students** to provide nutritious snacks to children in Toronto Community Housing Corporation summer programs. This program will run during the summer of 2003.
- ☀ In each of the last two years, the City has increased funding for **student nutrition programs** across the city.



- ☀ Parks and Recreation identified City-owned greenhouses for **year-round community gardening** at Rockcliffe Yards. In addition, \$70,000 in 2002 Ontario Works Incentive Funds was granted to renovate these **greenhouses** to enable year-round community gardening and production of nutritious foods popular in a number of ethno-cultural communities.
- ☀ Parks and Recreation received \$50,000 from the 2002 Ontario Works Incentive Fund to install **water hook-ups** in seven community gardens across Toronto.
- ☀ Parks and Recreation compiled a list of potential community gardening **sites** in City parks and developed a **Community Gardens Toolkit**.
- ☀ Parks and Recreation expanded the now-integrated Children's Garden and Exploring Toronto Program with a one-time allocation of \$50,000 under the 2002 Ontario Works Incentive Fund. The funding is used to build the capacity to offer children's gardening, nutrition and nature programs across Toronto. Four additional **Children's Gardens** were created or expanded in 2002.
- ☀ Parks and Recreation developed a Children's Garden and Exploring Toronto training and resource binder and **training kit** with program resources to assist Parks and Recreation centres to establish new children's gardening, nutrition and nature programs across the city.
- ☀ Community and Neighbourhood Services and Toronto Public Health, in consultation with homeless service providers and the Food Justice Coalition, worked to develop a new set of **Food and Nutrition and Food Safety standards** as part of the revised Shelter Standards, adopted by Council in November 2001.



4. The City as innovator in food security

The Growing Season highlighted a number of areas in which the City can lead the way with initiatives that respond to emerging social and economic trends that Toronto needs to keep abreast of for a variety of reasons, not just to improve food security. Innovation takes time and resources. City action in this area includes:

- ☼ The Toronto Food Policy Council sponsored the **Eat Local, Buy Local** conference in April 2003. This productive day-long event brought southern Ontario farmers together with chefs, retailers, processors and distributors, as well as public health and environmental groups interested in protecting local farmland and promoting healthy foods. Attendees welcomed the opportunity to network with new partners. A series of projects, including preparation of a cookbook for local foods in all seasons and an electronic list for local buyers and sellers, will be worked on prior to next year's meeting.



Local chefs, retailers, farmers, and city food advocates meet at historic Montgomery's Inn in First Local Food Conference, April 14, 2003

- ☼ Economic Development, Culture and Tourism staff are building on and promoting **current food processing initiatives**, including an Industry Capacity Study, co-processing development, a Food Business Development Centre and industry workshops. These initiatives will form the background to feed into an emerging business strategy.
- ☼ Staff of the Toronto Food Policy Council encouraged the development of **courses on food security** at Ryerson University's Centre for Studies in Food Security, York University's Faculty of Environmental Studies and the University of Toronto's Equity Studies Program at New College.

- ☀ Toronto Food Policy Council staff also facilitated the work of emergency food organizations working in the area of food recovery, to increase efforts to **reduce or divert food waste from landfill** sites. Innovative strategies include micro-processing enterprises to benefit low-income people, such as the Generous Helpings Kitchen recently launched by the Ontario Association of Food Banks. In addition, in April 2001, Second Harvest initiated the **Harvest Kitchens** program, a micro-processing enterprise, in partnership with Goodwill, the Learning Enrichment Foundation and the Centre for Opportunity, Respect and Empowerment.
- ☀ As part of the City's Task Force 2010 waste diversion strategy, Solid Waste Management Services has initiated several **Source Separated Organics** (SSO) collection programs to help reduce the amount of food waste going to landfill sites. One program involves single family residences and is being phased in throughout the city, starting in the former Etobicoke. A pilot program for multi-residential buildings is underway. Another permanent program using small roll out carts is available for commercial establishments that are entitled to City waste collection. The latest SSO pilot involves 20 City and school facilities, the results of which will be used to develop a possible city-wide program for these types of facilities.

5. The ripple effect: additional food security initiatives

A key part of the Food and Hunger Action Plan was to build on existing programs and to nurture emerging partnerships and opportunities. This included promoting an environment across the City of Toronto that encouraged City departments to develop, expand or enhance food security initiatives. Several departments found creative ways to integrate food security initiatives into their program areas. Actions taken include the following:

- ☀ City Councillors and staff participated in the Daily Bread Food Bank's highly-publicized **Walking in the Shoes of Welfare 2002**, a public education exercise to increase awareness of the issues facing Toronto's poor, which had participants trying to survive on a "welfare allowance" for one week.
- ☀ Parks and Recreation participated in the **Plant a Row, Grow a Row** initiative by encouraging community gardeners to grow and donate produce to either a food bank or one of nine drop-off sites in high-need area recreation centres. Recreation staff then distributed this fresh food to people in need. An estimated 8,000 pounds of food was donated in 2002.
- ☀ Community gardens located at recreation centres in several underserved areas of the city provide plots for people to grow and harvest their own food. As one example of the real difference community gardens can make, a **homeless man fed himself** for the last two summers from his plot in the Moss Park Community Garden.

- ☼ Toronto Public Health, the North York Heart Health Network, the Jane/Finch Community Ministry and North York Harvest Food Bank work in partnership on **Making Connections**, a community-based food project. Making Connections works to increase access to affordable, nutritious and culturally-acceptable fresh produce for low-income families and at-risk pregnant women in the North York area. The project involves market produce donations from local farmers, gleaning trips and educational workshops.
- ☼ City staff hosted a public education display on Toronto's food security initiatives at the 2003 **Royal Agricultural Winter Fair**.
- ☼ Taking community gardening to the next step, Parks and Recreation and the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority are looking to develop a six-acre **Urban Agriculture Farm** in north Toronto. This initiative would involve organic food production, donation of fresh produce to local food banks, youth training opportunities, and a cost-recovery component through sales to restaurants. City staff submitted a proposal for \$200,000 under the 2003 Ontario Works Incentive Fund for capital and developmental staff resources to help get the farm up and running. Council will decide on the allocation of this funding in July 2003.

- ☼ Urban Development (Planning), together with the regional municipalities of Halton, Peel, York and Durham and the Greater Toronto Area Federations of Agriculture, held the **GTA Agricultural Action Plan Workshop** on March 29, 2003. The workshop was a pivotal event in achieving the shared goal of keeping the GTA agricultural industry competitive given the economic, land use and labour pressures faced by farmers. The 50 participants identified a skeleton for a draft action plan, which will be prepared for discussion at the GTA Agricultural Action Plan Symposium to be held November 22, 2003 and finalized in early 2004.



The challenges

Implementing the recommendations of *The Growing Season* presented challenges as well as opportunities. The key challenge was the lack of funding allocated for implementation. As a result, City staff and community partners worked to implement recommendations for a host of new initiatives within the limits of existing resources. This was especially challenging for the community sector, which is already stretched to do more with less.

Some funding became available in 2002 through the Ontario Works Incentive Fund. This allowed a number of *The Growing Season's* initiatives to be realized. However, it should be noted that this funding was one-time only and was targeted to capital or developmental projects. It did not, therefore, address the need for sustainable funding of community-based food security programs.

The sheer newness and boldness of some of *The Growing Season* proposals also presented challenges. This includes brokering new partnerships between the public, community and private sectors on issues such as local food production. Other cities view the City of Toronto as a municipal pioneer in the area of food security. However, leaders usually learn by trial and error and so that too has brought challenges.

Where do we go from here?

Much has been accomplished over the last two years to establish an important role for the City of Toronto in the area of food security. We have laid a strong policy foundation. The principle of cross-sectoral co-operation is well established. The principle of partnerships that link City staff, the community and other government jurisdictions is widely accepted. These successes will help us as we direct more energy and resources toward working with people to develop local food initiatives.



Tending the garden: the crops

We have learned something about the capability of a variety of different tools. Now it is time to pick the best ones for finishing some specific jobs. That means choosing priorities that can focus time and energy. After planting the seeds comes growing, and the growing season involves tasks such as pruning, which ensures that specific plants get their best chance of growing to their full potential. That is why this new report, *Tending The Garden*, recommends that we focus our efforts on three program areas over the next term of Council. These areas are community gardens, community kitchens and farmers' markets.

The program areas were chosen based on input from both City and community partners. We also developed a set of criteria, based on our learnings over the last two years, to guide our decision. Overall, we want to continue to be proactive in promoting the principles and directions in City documents such as the Strategic Plan, Official Plan, Environmental Plan and the Social Development Strategy. We also want to proceed on the commitments of the *Toronto Food Charter*. In addition, each of the recommended programs meet or exceed the following criteria:

- a) They advance the City's food security goals by fostering individual and community self-reliance, by assuring access to essential food services in all geographic areas of the city, and by supporting innovation in the City's physical and social infrastructure.
- b) They promote ongoing partnerships linking City programs with leaders and resources in the community, other levels of government, charitable foundations and the private sector.
- c) They provide measurable benefits for multiple stakeholders (quantitative or qualitative).

- d) They create opportunities for staffing synergies and cross-fertilization through the involvement of different City departments.
- e) They optimize use of the City's existing physical, social and community facilities and infrastructure.
- f) They leave a permanent legacy in physical, social and community infrastructure.

Community gardens bring people together on a constructive project that benefits both the individuals who participate and the neighbourhood as a whole. In addition to growing food to eat, community gardens provide a chance for people to meet their neighbours, co-operate and share resources, get fresh air and exercise and even beautify their neighbourhood.

Community kitchens provide a multitude of social, economic and nutritional benefits. Community kitchens have been particularly successful among newcomers. Community kitchens help people manage their food dollars by learning to cook from scratch while reducing reliance on over-packaged foods. They are an opportunity to meet new people and to preserve food traditions from their country of origin while learning about new foods. Some community kitchens also serve as incubators for entrepreneurs, who can spot niche marketing possibilities that can be filled with their speciality.

Farmers' markets attract tourists and visitors and bring a sense of vitality to public spaces. Farmers' markets support local agriculture and provide benefits to local economies as people attending markets also frequent neighbouring businesses. Markets also benefit public health by bringing people together around healthy food. Some cities have also capitalized on the potential for city-supported farmers' markets to sell bulk food at deep discounts to increase access to more affordable food.

The Food and Hunger Action Committee's strategy as set out in this report aims to work with the community in each of the above-named areas to achieve the following outcomes by the end of 2006:

- ☀ **Increase the number of community gardens** (by approximately 25) to provide nutritional, physical, social and recreational benefits to local residents. Of these community gardens, at least 15 would be located in areas experiencing food insecurity, because of low incomes or distance from food stores that stock a range of affordable, nutritious and culturally-acceptable foods. Approximately five community gardens would be designated for high-need communities that need support to grow food themselves (for example, seniors, people with disabilities, psychiatric survivors, and people with developmental delays).
- ☀ **Increase the number of community baking ovens** (by approximately 10) to be located in well-used parks throughout Toronto, to allow local communities to bake fresh, healthy food while increasing the safety and vitality of their park.
- ☀ **Increase the number of community kitchen programs** (by approximately 60) that provide educational, cooking and socializing opportunities for a diverse range of community groups including seniors, newcomers, young parents, etc.
- ☀ **Increase the number of capital upgrades to kitchens in priority recreation centres** (by approximately 10) to support use by community groups for community cooking and food initiatives.
- ☀ **Increase the number of community farmers' markets** (by approximately 20) on publicly-accessible land to provide opportunities to purchase affordable, local and fresh foods, especially in areas where people face problems gaining convenient access to retail outlets offering a range of affordable, nutritious and culturally-acceptable foods.

Tending the garden: the tools

Our proposed targets are ambitious but achievable. For many years, community-based groups and agencies have demonstrated the growing need for community food programs. Many reports, including those of the Food and Hunger Action Committee, have confirmed this need and advocated for more funding for food security initiatives. Investment in this area is both timely and essential.

Moving forward requires the active involvement of City Councillors, City staff and community partners. The central objective of our proposed strategy is to build capacity in the community to identify, develop and run food security programs that meet local needs. Community-based groups and agencies understand best the needs and capacities of their neighbourhoods. They are also ready, willing and able to implement food security initiatives, provided resources are available to support them.

The City's one-year Food and Hunger Action Fund reinforced the validity of this perspective. The quality of applications to this program was extremely high. The proposals reflected not only the depth of food insecurity in Toronto, but also the wealth of creative solutions available to respond. Community food initiatives are cost-effective investments that yield multiple returns. The benefits felt by participants and the broader community are physical, social and environmental improvements. People involved in a community garden can feed themselves with nutritious, affordable food; they can strengthen their community connections by meeting other gardeners; and they can contribute to greening our city and reducing landfill waste by composting.

The Food and Hunger Action Committee supports sustainable funding for community-based food initiatives. This funding is essential if we are to achieve the program goals recommended in our strategy.

Recommendation #1

That City Council approve \$1 million in new funding for Community and Neighbourhood Services to establish a permanent food security grants program.

As a complement to this, a proposal has been submitted under the 2003 Ontario Works Incentive Fund for a one-year Community Food Animation Project. This idea follows from an unmet recommendation of *The Growing Season*. Under this initiative, four community workers with knowledge and experience in community food programming would be contracted from community-based agencies to do “animation” in high-need areas of the city. The animators would focus on developing local capacity in the areas of community gardens, kitchens and farmers’ markets.

This project addresses one of the challenges identified in *The Growing Season*. Organizations in several high-need areas of the city, such as central Scarborough, have a limited capacity to develop new programs or to compete successfully for funding. This suggests the need for targeted developmental support to build longer-term capacity in these areas. The City has good information about vulnerable communities in our city to guide this work. This includes the *Toronto Report Card on Children 2002* and a report from the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services on allocations for the Food and Hunger Action Fund, which identified areas of the city where proposals were lacking.

In addition, to support the focus on community kitchens, a proposal for \$100,000 has been submitted under the 2003 Ontario Works Incentive Fund for small capital upgrades to 20 kitchens in priority recreation centres. Most centres have kitchens but need small capital equipment upgrades and/or repairs to improve the facilities for use by both Parks and Recreation staff and community groups for food programs such as community kitchens.

Tending the garden: the gardeners

The Food and Hunger Action Committee has provided important leadership on food security issues at the City of Toronto. This work is not finished. Food security cuts across departmental and committee mandates, and no one has overall carriage of these issues. We need to be more proactive in raising the profile of food security issues at City Council and City committees.

The links between food security and broader social issues such as income security and the need for more affordable housing also needs to be reinforced. More targeted advocacy is needed, in collaboration with City and community partners, to advance these issues if change is to happen. The Food and Hunger Action Committee is well-placed to provide this city-wide leadership. A revised terms of reference will need to be developed to reflect this ongoing mandate and role.

Recommendation #2

That the Food and Hunger Action Committee continue as a subcommittee of the Community Services Committee to:

- a) Actively advocate on the links between food security and income security and affordable housing
- b) Promote awareness of food security issues at City Council and its committees
- c) Continue to work with City staff and community partners to integrate the principles of the *Toronto Food Charter* into City of Toronto initiatives.

The Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC), which reports to the Board of Health, provides a comprehensive public health perspective, as well as a decade of experience linking agricultural and food production improvements to necessary initiatives in food distribution. The TFPC has an explicit mandate to deal with emerging, experimental or “frontier” possibilities for food system reform. The TFPC can seed initiatives that need development before presentation to Council committees with broader mandates and reporting relationships such as the Food and Hunger Action Committee.

The lack of dedicated resources has been a challenge in implementing the Food and Hunger Action Plan. A commitment to extending the term and mandate of the Food and Hunger Action Committee will require a dedicated staff position. This staff position will co-ordinate the overall activities of the Food and Hunger Action Committee. This includes co-ordination of the Food and Hunger Interdepartmental Staff Committee and liaison with the Food Justice Coalition and other community partners on food security issues of shared concern.

Recommendation #3

That one full-time staff position be dedicated to co-ordinate the portfolio of activities related to the Food and Hunger Action Committee.

The Food and Hunger Interdepartmental Staff Committee has been effective in fostering new and enhanced partnerships across City departments. Staff have improved co-ordination and identified many opportunities for collaboration using existing resources. The group has also helped to increase awareness of the need to integrate food security initiatives across City programming. This has produced initiatives over and above those recommended in *The Growing Season*. Building on these successes, City staff will continue to identify new opportunities and partnerships to expand food security policies and programs within the City. A revised terms of reference will need to be developed to reflect this ongoing mandate and role.

Recommendation #4

That the Food and Hunger Interdepartmental Staff Committee continue to meet to identify new opportunities and partnerships to expand food security policies and programs within the City of Toronto.

As highlighted elsewhere in this report, community partners such as the Food Justice Coalition must continue to be actively involved with both the Food and Hunger Action Committee and the work of City staff. Our community partners provide an important “reality check” on what is happening in neighbourhoods, communities, and in people’s everyday lives.

Conclusion

Much has been accomplished over the last two years to establish a strong role for the City of Toronto in the area of food security. We have laid a strong policy foundation that will help us as we direct more energy and resources to working with people to develop local food initiatives.

Moving forward requires the active involvement of City Councillors, City staff and our community partners. The central objective of our proposed strategy is to build capacity in the community to identify, develop and run food security programs that best meet local needs.

This report, *Tending the Garden*, recommends that over the next term of Council, we focus our efforts to:

- ☀ Advocate on the links between food security and income security and affordable housing
- ☀ Increase the profile of food security initiatives at the City of Toronto
- ☀ Support communities to develop more community gardens, community kitchens and farmers’ markets.



Summary of recommendations

Recommendation #1

That City Council approve \$1 million in new funding for Community and Neighbourhood Services to establish a permanent food security grants program.

Recommendation #2

That the Food and Hunger Action Committee continue as a sub-committee of the Community Services Committee to:

- a) Actively advocate on the links between food security and income security and affordable housing
- b) Promote awareness of food security issues at City Council and its committees
- c) Continue to work with City staff and community partners to integrate the principles of the Toronto Food Charter into City of Toronto initiatives.

Recommendation #3

That one full-time City staff position be dedicated to co-ordinate the portfolio of activities related to the Food and Hunger Action Committee.

Recommendation #4

That the Food and Hunger Interdepartmental Staff Committee continue to meet to identify new opportunities and partnerships to expand food security policies and programs within the City of Toronto.



Appendix A: Implementation summary of *The Growing Season* recommendations

Rating of City action taken *(total of 38 recommendations)*

Rating Code	1a Implemented	1b Alternate was implemented	1c Partially implemented	2 Implementation is underway	3a Not implemented due to lack of resources	3b Not implemented due to unresolved issues
Number of Rec's implemented	17	3	10	2	3	3

Growing Season Recommendation	Rating	Outcome
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1. Continue to urge the Province to increase the shelter component maximum of social assistance to reflect local market rents, increase funding for rent supplements and create a new shelter allowance program for the working poor.

1 a

Since 1995, when the Province reduced social assistance rates by 21.6%, the City of Toronto has asked seven times for the Province to increase social assistance rates. To date, the Province has not implemented this recommendation.

In February 2003, the City of Toronto endorsed the province-wide Pay the Rent and Feed the Kids campaign to increase social assistance benefits and reintroduce rent controls. The City also agreed to lend its name and resources to public education initiatives related to the campaign. On March 12, 2003, the City joined the Pay the Rent and Feed the Kids coalition to unveil a poster campaign to promote this initiative across Toronto.

In May 2003, Council adopted recommendations from the Food and Hunger Action Committee and the Community Services Committee for the City to reaffirm its position and petition the Province to not only restore the 21.6 % cut but also to increase social assistance benefits and the minimum wage by the rate of inflation for each year since 1995, up to and including 2003.

The City has also asked the Province to increase funding for rent supplements, most recently to ensure the affordability of units developed under the new federal Community Rental Housing Program. Existing funding will create units at CMHC market rent levels, which will not be affordable to people with very low incomes.

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Growing Season Recommendation			Rating	Outcome		
2. Urge the Province to rescind its decision on the National Child Benefit Supplement and allow families receiving social assistance benefits to keep all income received from the supplement as a way to improve the incomes of low-income families.			1 a	<p>The City has urged the Province to take this action to help improve the incomes of families on social assistance. To date, the Province has not implemented this recommendation.</p> <p>In May 2003, Council approved recommendations in a report from Toronto Social Services asking the Province to endorse an “Ontario Child Supplement” proposal suggested by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). Under this proposal, the Province would provide the child component of the current Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program. The proposal also assumes that the National Child Benefit Supplement can then be kept by families on social assistance thereby increasing their income.</p> <p>The governing provincial government did announce a campaign promise, in May 2003, to create a new Ontario Child Benefit for parents receiving social assistance. The benefit would provide \$1,500 for the first child, \$1,300 for the second and \$1,200 for each subsequent child. This new benefit would provide critical resources for these families. The Province should be urged to act on this promise immediately.</p>		
3. Urge the federal and provincial governments to act on the recommendations in the <i>Toronto Report Card on Homelessness 2001</i> .			1 a	<p>The City has asked both the provincial and federal governments to implement the recommendations of the 2001 report card. The main action to date is the announcement of the new federal Community Rental Housing Program. At the November 30, 2001 meeting of federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for housing, an agreement was reached on a framework to increase the supply of affordable housing through capital grants over five years. The agreement means that if all the provinces and territories agree to participate, the proposed \$680-million federal investment for this program would lever an additional \$680 million of spending from other sources, nation-wide.</p>		

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Growing Season Recommendation			Rating	Outcome		
						<p>About \$245 million will come to Ontario, under an agreement signed in May 2002. This amount is to be matched under the agreement by provincial and municipal contributions — mostly municipal in practice. It is expected that about \$60 million of this will come to Toronto. This will help produce 2,000 or more new units in Toronto over the next three to five years. After a decade of not funding new affordable housing, this is an encouraging direction. However, the funding is not enough to meet the need or to develop housing that is truly affordable for very low-income people. Recently, the Province announced the details of the Ontario framework for municipal delivery. The City of Toronto welcomes this news as this allows for implementation of the program. However, the City is also asking the Province to institute enhanced and sustainable rent supplements to enable low-income people to access these units once built.</p>
4. Continue to advocate to the Province to establish a comprehensive provincial food and nutrition strategy and provide funding to the Ontario Public Health Association to support a full-time provincial food security co-ordinator.				3b		<p>By way of preparation for this recommendation, Toronto Public Health is focusing efforts internally to increase awareness, buy-in and build the capacity of staff to undertake and support community food security initiatives, before taking advocacy action at the provincial level. This activity is also consistent with the Ontario Public Health Association's position on public health's role in community food security.</p>
5. Ask the Province to match the City's contribution to child nutrition programs in Toronto.				3b		<p>City funding for student nutrition programs has had modest increases each budget year. However, provincial funding has not kept pace with the increased demand. In fact, programs in Toronto will be experiencing decreased provincial funding due to funding criteria changes implemented to cope with the increased demand. The Canadian Living Foundation (administrator of the provincial funding) met with the Toronto Student Nutrition Steering Committee in early April 2003 to discuss the impact of the new provincial funding changes. The Toronto Partners for Student Nutrition is planning an advocacy strategy to lobby for increased provincial funding.</p>

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Growing Season Recommendation			Rating	Outcome		
6. Urge the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, in co-operation with the Toronto District School Board, to ensure that all newly-constructed schools and all renovations to schools include adequate kitchen facilities and lunch rooms for students, and to ensure that all students have adequate time in their school schedule to eat a healthy lunch.			1 c	Toronto Public Health staff has pilot-tested a resource, Action Towards Healthy Eating in Toronto Schools, that individual schools can use to create healthy eating environments. Implementation will continue.		
7. Urge the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to include urban agriculture in the Healthy Futures Funding Program.			1 a	The Healthy Futures Program has confirmed that it will consider urban food production applications under this program.		
8. Urge Health Canada to initiate a national food and nutrition monitoring system; to support this system, Statistics Canada should include questions that monitor food insecurity in a national population-level survey to determine the extent and nature of hunger in Canada.			1 a	<p>In collaboration with other public health stakeholders, the Medical Officer of Health advocated with Health Canada, as part of a stakeholder consultation, strongly recommending federal investment in national monitoring systems and enhanced surveillance methods.</p> <p>Questions related to food security were included as part of the Canadian Community Health Survey and the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System.</p>		
9. Urge Health Canada to increase funding for nutritious foods for the participants of the Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program, so that programs do not have to rely on food banks.			1 b	Although Health Canada has been urged in the past to increase its funding to CPNP programs to prevent reliance on food banks, the issue has evolved into a need to have local program policies on restricting the use of charitable food in government-funded programs. Toronto Public Health staff are now working on an internal policy which can then be used with partnering groups. The general principles are that quality nutrition programs cannot be built on charitable access to food and that food banks are meant to serve emergency food needs, not ongoing food and nutrition programs.		

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Growing Season Recommendation			Rating	Outcome		
10.	Request that the Chair of the Board of Health bring a summary of the annual estimate of the cost of a nutritious food basket in Toronto before City Council, so that City Council can use the estimates to make its case for provincial and federal measures to address food security.		1 a	<p>As mandated, Toronto Public Health submits annual reports on the cost of a Nutritious Food Basket to the Board of Health and the Ministry of Health.</p> <p>Reports on the cost of the Nutritious Food Basket for 2001 and 2002 were submitted to the Community Services Committee through the Food and Hunger Action Committee in the last two years. In 2002, FAHAC and Toronto Council endorsed advocacy recommendations following from the 2001 nutritious food basket report, prepared by the Toronto Food Policy Council.</p> <p>In May 2003, Council approved recommendations from the Food and Hunger Action Committee to appoint a delegation to include members of FAHAC to meet with the Ministers of Community, Family and Children's Services and Labour to discuss the implications of the rising cost of the nutritious food basket and the need to increase the minimum wage and adjust social assistance rates to reflect the rising cost of living.</p>		
11.	Support Toronto Public Health, in collaboration with its community partners, in its efforts to enhance nutrition and food security information and links on the City's Web site.		2	<p>Toronto Public Health is developing a Web site dedicated to nutrition and food security issues. They are also in discussions with Corporate Communications and Community Information Toronto to strategize on ways to enhance information available to the community on food and nutrition-related programs and services.</p>		
12.	Support Community and Neighbourhood Services and other agencies working with people who are disabled by helping to disseminate information on income assistance programs to ensure that disabled people receive benefits for which they qualify.		1 a	<p>Toronto Social Services (TSS) regularly distributes information on City benefit programs, such as Ontario Works and the Shelter Fund for families on social assistance.</p> <p>The Province has restricted the role of TSS related to other income programs, such as the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). For example, TSS staff cannot directly refer people to ODSP.</p>		

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Growing Season Recommendation			Rating	Outcome		
13. Request that Corporate Services, Community and Neighbourhood Services and Economic Development, Culture and Tourism prepare a report providing an inventory of kitchen facilities and spaces owned by the City and its agencies, and appropriate policy guidelines governing their use by community-based groups.			1 C	<p>Staff from Community and Neighbourhood Services and Economic Development, Culture and Tourism (Parks & Recreation) and Toronto Public Health have developed an inventory of kitchens in priority recreation centres. Most centres have kitchen facilities and are being used by community groups for food programming. However, some centres require small capital equipment upgrades and/or kitchen supplies to improve the capacity of these facilities to be used for this purpose.</p> <p>City staff have submitted a proposal for \$100,000 under the 2003 Ontario Works Incentive Fund for small capital upgrades for up to 20 kitchens in priority recreation centres. Council will approve funding allocations under this program in July 2003.</p> <p>The development of policy guidelines for how these facilities are used by community groups and a strategy for promoting use of kitchens in recreation centres is underway.</p>		
14. Request that Facilities and Real Estate and Parks and Recreation, in co-operation with Toronto Public Health, develop guidelines for the construction and renovation of City-owned buildings to ensure that kitchen facilities are adequate for community food security programs.			1 C	<p>Action taken on this recommendation relates primarily to City-owned recreation centres. Based on information related to the inventory noted in recommendation #13, City staff have submitted a proposal for funding under the 2003 Ontario Works Incentive Fund for capital upgrades to kitchens in priority recreation centres so they in turn can be used for community kitchen/food programming. A report seeking approval of funding allocations for the 2003 Ontario Works Incentive Fund will go to Council in July 2003.</p> <p>In addition, Parks and Recreation obtained \$46,000 from the 2002 Ontario Works Incentive Fund to renovate the kitchen at the Jimmie Simpson Community Centre, and to operate a Nutritional Cooking Program. Staff are working with an advisory council and community partners on this initiative. The expected date for completion of the kitchen renovation is July 2003.</p>		

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Growing Season Recommendation			Rating	Outcome		
15. Request the Toronto Food Policy Council, in consultation with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), to form a working group with appropriate City staff and community partners, to report on the opportunities to expand community food initiatives in the City's social housing portfolio.			1c	<p>A presentation by City staff and members of the Food Justice Coalition on developing food security initiatives was well received by community workers in TCHC. More work is needed to develop partnerships to expand community food initiatives in housing programs.</p> <p>Staff from the Toronto Food Policy Council and the Shelter, Housing and Support Division of Community and Neighbourhood Services are working with staff and residents of a TCHC site in the Sherbourne and Queen Streets area to increase access to food retail outlets for this under-served community.</p> <p>Also see recommendation #22.</p>		
16. Enhance the Community and Neighbourhood Services Community Services Grants program by \$250,000.00 a year for the next three years to fund a three-year pilot program employing four Community Food Co-ordinators placed with community agencies across the city.			3a	<p>This recommendation was not pursued in the adoption of <i>The Growing Season</i> due to the financial pressures on the City's 2001 budget.</p> <p>City staff submitted a proposal under the 2003 Ontario Works Incentive Fund for a one-year Community Food Animation Project. Under this project, four community workers with knowledge and experience in community food programs would be contracted from community-based organizations, to do "food animation" in high-need areas of the city.</p> <p>A report seeking approval of funding allocations for the 2003 Ontario Works Incentive Fund will go forward to Council in July 2003.</p>		
17. Request that Community and Neighbourhood Services and Urban Development Services, in consultation with the Toronto Food Policy Council, conduct a study to identify areas in the city in which food retail access is inadequate and to prepare a list of options the City can consider to remedy this problem.			2	<p>Retail food access was identified as an issue in the City's new Official Plan. Staff from the Toronto Food Policy Council and Social Development and Administration Division in Community and Neighbourhood Services have worked with University of Toronto Planning students to document the extent of the problem. The Toronto Food Policy Council will be preparing a report with proposed solutions, for release in 2003.</p>		

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18. Encourage Economic Development, Culture and Tourism to continue providing space for farmers' markets at civic centres to add vitality to these public spaces as well as to provide an opportunity for Torontonians to meet local farmers and buy the freshest food possible.			1 a	<p>The City of Toronto supports farmers' markets at some civic centres in Toronto. Public interest in farmers' markets, a major trend in food retail across the world, is leading to the development of markets in a variety of public spaces. This includes parks, churches, community centres and streetscapes. Therefore, what is required is a revised strategy that is adapted to the diversity of both public spaces and community needs. In several areas of the city, farmers' markets are emerging as important vehicles for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to quality food in areas under-served by conventional supermarkets • promoting locally-grown food • revitalizing public spaces. <p>New farmers' markets (see #19) will be test sites for the viability of markets as a substitute for conventional food retail, especially for ethno-cultural groups.</p>		
19. Pilot a special community market for neighbourhoods underserved by conventional food stores to increase Toronto residents' opportunities to purchase fresh and affordable food.			1 a	<p>Parks and Recreation staff, in concert with Toronto Public Health, FoodShare and local community agencies, identified Flemingdon as a neighbourhood interested in developing a special community farmers' market to increase local access to fresh, affordable and culturally acceptable food. Funding for the development of this initiative has been allocated under the City's new Food and Hunger Action Fund (see recommendation #26 for more details on this fund).</p> <p>A similar initiative in Parkdale, led by community groups and the local library and community centre, was also funded under the Food and Hunger Action Fund.</p>		

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20. Request that Community and Neighbourhood Services establish a Community Food Initiatives Awards Program to honour the contributions of the volunteers who support the city's community-based food security sector.				1 a	<p>In 2001, the City developed the Food Action Awards for Community Volunteers, in consultation with the Food and Hunger Action Committee and the Food Justice Coalition. In the first year, over 70 community volunteers were nominated and 31 volunteers received awards in a well-attended November event.</p> <p>Some modifications were made to the program and in 2002, 34 volunteers from community-based food programs across Toronto received awards from the City in the categories of Lifetime Achievement, Outstanding Achievement and Community Spirit. An enthusiastic crowd of supporters attended a celebration to honour the contribution of these dedicated volunteers.</p>	
21. Continue to fund the Child Nutrition Program according to the shared funding partnership model.				1 a	<p>The City continued its funding for student nutrition programs in 2002/2003, providing a total of \$1,955,340, and recently approved an additional \$44,000, bringing the municipal base budget to \$1,999,340 for 2003/04. It should be noted that funding for these programs comes from a fixed pot. Therefore, as more schools apply for funding the amount available for each individual program is in fact reduced.</p> <p>The City's one-time Food and Hunger Action Fund also approved capital funding for 11 projects to improve some of the municipally funded student nutrition programs across the city.</p>	
22. Provide \$27,000 for a summer pilot project that employs secondary school students to provide nutritious snacks to children enrolled in City-run summer programs.				1 a	<p>Toronto Public Health received \$27,000 for this pilot project through the 2002 Ontario Works Incentive Fund. The program is being launched in the summer of 2003 in partnership with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation. Although this is one-time funding only, it is hoped that programs may meet criteria for the municipal student nutrition program funding after the pilot is completed.</p>	
23. Maintain its support for congregate dining and meal programs that help meet the nutritional needs of seniors.				1 a	<p>The City of Toronto continues to fund congregate dining and meal programs through the Community Services Grants Program.</p>	



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24.	Request the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services to work with emergency shelters and related programs to develop a policy encouraging meal options that are both nutritious and appropriate for people subject to dietary, cultural and ethical restrictions.		1 a	Staff in the Social Development and Administration Division and Toronto Public Health, in partnership with homeless service providers and the Food Justice Coalition, developed the first comprehensive set of food safety and nutrition standards for emergency shelters in Toronto. In December 2002, Toronto Council adopted these as part of a broader set of Shelter Standards for City-operated and City-funded shelters. An implementation strategy for the new standards, which includes staff training requirements, is underway.		
25.	Provide \$106,500 to ensure continuation of the peer education component of the partnership with community agencies involved with the Cooking Healthy Together program in 2001 and to enable staff and the community agencies involved to seek alternative long-term sources of funding for this program.		3a	This recommendation was not pursued in the adoption of <i>The Growing Season</i> , due to the financial implications for the City's 2001 budget. However, City staff continue to work with its community partners to find alternative sources of funding for this program.		
26.	Establish a three-year Food Alternatives Grants program as a pilot project under the Community Service Grants Program, to enable community groups and agencies to plan their activities; the pilot project would continue for three years with \$500,000 in funding for each year.		1 b	<p>This recommendation was not pursued in the adoption of <i>The Growing Season</i> due to the financial pressures on the City's 2001 budget.</p> <p>However, under the 2002 Ontario Works Incentive Fund, \$750,000 was approved for a one-time Food and Hunger Action Fund (FHAF), for allocation in 2003. Funding was targeted to community food security programs that assist disadvantaged and/or high-risk communities.</p> <p>The proposals submitted to this fund reflected not only the depth of food insecurity in Toronto but also the wide range of organizations that have identified these issues and the creative approaches available to address them. A total of 49 food security projects were funded across Toronto. Unfortunately, 26 solid projects could not be funded simply due to lack of funds. An additional \$425,000 would have been needed.</p> <p>As discussed in the main section of this report, the Food and Hunger Action Committee is recommending that the City establish a \$1,500,000 permanent food grants program to expand and enhance the capacity of communities to provide local responses to food insecurity.</p>		

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27. Pilot a two-year Community Food Initiatives project funding stream under the Community Service Grants Program; the funding would be \$250,000 a year in 2002 and 2003.			1 b	See recommendation #26.		
28. Make the Community Gardens Co-ordinator a permanent position and hire two additional garden animators, at a cost of \$73,000, to meet its goal of ensuring that every Toronto ward has at least one community garden by 2003.			1 C	<p>Economic Development, Culture and Tourism has made the Community Gardens Program Co-ordinator a permanent position, and hired two additional support staff.</p> <p>In addition, under the 2002 Ontario Works Incentive Fund initiative, Parks and Recreation received \$50,000 to install water service in seven community gardens in high-need neighbourhoods across the city. To date, water service has been installed in two community gardens. However, the Council-approved goal of establishing at least one community garden in every ward remains unfulfilled. Achieving this goal requires additional resources. Currently, there are 14 wards without a community garden on publicly-owned space and 23 wards without gardens on City parklands.</p>		
29. That the City extend its partnership with FoodShare to include the Toronto Community Garden Network to ensure TCGN members access to assistance and resources from Toronto Parks and Recreation.			1 C	<p>Parks and Recreation staff have convened meetings to develop strategies to promote partnerships. Staff is also working with the TCGN members on this initiative. One issue that has emerged from discussions to date is the lack of resources for gardening initiatives on City lands that are not parks. This is an opportunity that needs to be pursued as part of the next phase of the Food and Hunger Action Committee's work.</p>		

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30. Request all City departments and agencies to identify underused lands or greenhouses that could be made available to community gardeners working with the Community Garden Co-ordinator.			1 C	<p>Parks and Recreation staff, in consultation with Facilities and Real Estate, have developed a list of potential sites in City parks for the establishment of community gardens. They have also identified one greenhouse site for year-round gardening at the Rockcliffe Yard in the former City of York.</p> <p>The volunteers of the Community Gardens Program use the Rockcliffe Yard greenhouses on an ongoing basis. A community group at the East York Community Centre may be interested in making use of the East York greenhouses. Parks and Recreation received \$70,000 under the 2002 Ontario Works Incentive Fund to renovate the Rockcliffe greenhouses, and to hire a Communication and Profile Staff person to create a media package to increase the profile of the Community Gardens Program in disadvantaged communities. Price quotes are being reviewed for the renovation of the greenhouses. In addition, a Communication and Profile staff person has been hired and has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created an outreach pamphlet and newsletter • Created slide show, display board and photo album • Conducted several community consultation/orientation sessions • Worked with Rockcliffe Middle School to develop a student gardening program. <p>In a new collaboration with the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority, Parks and Recreation is exploring an opportunity to develop an Urban Agriculture Farm on a six-acre TRCA site in north Toronto. This initiative would involve organic food production, donation of fresh produce to local food banks, youth training opportunities, and a cost-recovery component through sales to high-end restaurants. City staff submitted a proposal for \$200,000 under the 2003 Ontario Works Incentive Fund for capital and developmental staff resources to help get the farm up and running. Council will decide on the allocation of this funding in July 2003.</p>		

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31. Allocate additional resources in 2002 to the Children's Garden Program, co-ordinated by Parks and Recreation to increase the number of children's gardens available to one per district by 2006 (an increase of three gardens).			1 a	<p>The Children's Garden program has been integrated with the Exploring Toronto program. Parks and Recreation received \$50,000 under the 2002 Ontario Works Incentive Fund to expand this integrated program across Toronto. Funds are being used to build the capacity of Parks and Recreation to develop and run children's gardening, nutrition and nature programs across the city. Outcomes thus far include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four additional Children's Gardens were created or expanded in 2002 • Training for 28 recreation staff conducted in Summer and Fall 2002 • "Permaculture" workshop conducted in Summer 2002 • Revision and distribution of children's gardening resource kits • Environmental programming implemented/integrated into nine additional locations in summer/fall 2002. 		
32. Request the Commissioner of Corporate Services to establish a working group of staff involved in purchasing, food policy and economic development, representatives of local growers and processors, and representatives of potential clients in City and community agencies, to review opportunities for buying food co-operatively at bulk rate discounts.			1 C	<p>The Toronto Food Policy Council is hosting a series of networking conferences beginning in April 2003 to improve the infrastructure for increased purchases of locally produced foods. As this infrastructure improves, bulk purchasing by the City will become more viable.</p> <p>Long-distance hauling of food has become the regular practice. Therefore, little exists in the way of hard infrastructure (warehouses, microprocessors, etc) or soft (brokers, etc) to support local food systems. The Toronto Food Policy Council has initiated a process to start developing this infrastructure.</p>		

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33. Request that Economic Development, Culture and Tourism work with the Food Policy Council, representatives of the food microprocessing industry and researchers, investors, trainers and others who can help this industry grouping meet its potential, and to develop a business strategy for this critical component in the food and beverage cluster of Toronto's economy.			1c	<p>City staff are building on and promoting current EDCT food processing initiatives, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry Capacity Study • Co-processing development • Food Business Development Centre • Industry workshops. <p>These initiatives will form the background to feed into a possible business strategy.</p> <p>In October 2002, EDCT staff, in conjunction with Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, produced the report "Food Industry Outlook: A Study of Food-Industry Growth Trends in Toronto."</p>		
34. Promote urban agriculture by:			3a	<p>Most of the aspects of this recommendation were not implemented due to lack of staff resources.</p> <p>However, some small measures were achieved. For example, Ryerson University has initiated a certificate program in food security. The New College at the University of Toronto has piloted a senior seminar on food security. York University's Faculty of Environmental Studies is exploring possibilities for expanded programming in this area.</p> <p>As noted previously, Parks and Recreation staff are working with the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority to develop an Urban Agriculture Farm on a six-acre site in north Toronto. This initiative would involve organic food production, donation of fresh produce to local food banks, youth training opportunities, and a cost-recovery component through sales to high-end restaurants. City staff submitted a proposal for \$200,000 under the 2003 Ontario Works Incentive Fund for capital and developmental staff resources to help get the farm up and running. Council will make final decisions on the allocation of this funding in July 2003.</p>		

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(f) requesting staff preparing the Wet Weather Flow Management Master Plan to identify opportunities for urban agriculture to contribute to cost-effective water management.				As part of the City's Task Force 2010 waste diversion strategy, Solid Waste Management Services has initiated several Source Separated Organics (SSO) collection programs to help reduce the amount of food waste going to landfill sites. One program involves single family residences and is being phased in throughout the City, starting in the former Etobicoke. A pilot program for multi-residential buildings is underway. Another permanent program using small roll out carts is available for commercial establishments that are entitled to City waste collection. The latest SSO pilot involves 20 City and school facilities the results of which will be used to develop a possible city-wide program for these types of facilities.		
35. Request the Commissioners of Urban Development Services and Economic Development, Culture and Tourism and representatives of TEDCO and the Food Policy Council to work with private-sector and community-based investors and operators to facilitate pilot projects testing the viability of commercial greenhouses on brownfield sites.			3b	In November 2001, the Province enacted legislation to encourage the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites and released a draft Regulation for public consultation in February 2003. Once in force, the Regulation will establish the rules and procedures for the cleanup of brownfield sites to allow them to be redeveloped. It is anticipated that this new legislation will encourage cleanup and increase the market value of these sites. There may be opportunity for green roofs, or for commercial greenhouses if certain conditions are met.		
36. Request the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services to work with community food agencies to explore programs that divert organic materials from the waste stream and convert foodstuffs into valuable products by:			1 C	<p>City staff are helping emergency food organizations working in the area of food recovery to step up their efforts to reduce or divert food waste from landfill sites. Innovative strategies include micro-processing enterprises to benefit low-income people.</p> <p>Capital funding support for food security initiatives was allocated to community-based organizations under both the Food and Hunger Action Fund and the federal Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative.</p> <p>The federal government, through HRDC, supported the Scadding Court Community Centre and the Alexander Park Housing Co-op in their efforts to establish a community composting program that can evaluate outreach strategies to multi-unit and multi-cultural communities. WES staff worked</p>		

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Growing Season Recommendation			Rating	Outcome		
	<p>(d) sponsoring a pilot to help food agencies compost material that would otherwise go to landfill and to determine the resulting cost savings for the City</p> <p>(e) helping food agencies obtain capital equipment (such as trucks, refrigerators and processing equipment) through government or private funding</p> <p>(f) considering the most cost-effective methods of supporting food agency participation in waste reduction programs.</p>			<p>with the Ontario Association of Food Banks to increase their access to composting equipment. The Province donated three commercial quality composters to the Ontario Association of Food Banks.</p> <p>Funding from HRDC and the Youth Employment envelope of the federal Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative supported a commercial kitchen sponsored by the Ontario Association of Food Banks, which will lead to recovery of foods previously wasted in landfills.</p> <p>In addition, in April 2001, Second Harvest initiated the Harvest Kitchens program, a micro-processing enterprise, in partnership with Goodwill, the Learning Enrichment Foundation and the Centre for Opportunity, Respect and Empowerment. The Food and Hunger Action Committee and a sub-committee of the Food Justice Coalition oversee implementation of the recommendations of <i>The Growing Season</i>.</p>		
	37. Request the Food and Hunger Action Committee, in collaboration with members of the Community Reference Group, to oversee implementation of the recommendations in this report, and to provide a comprehensive progress report to Council in the fall of 2002.		1 a	A progress report on implementation of <i>The Growing Season</i> was submitted to the Community Services Committee in May 2002. This final report is submitted to the July 2003 meeting of the Community Services Committee to enable additional time for implementation.		
	38. Request staff with the Toronto Food Policy Council and Social Development and Administration Division to take the lead in setting up an interdepartmental staff group (comprised of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, Urban Development Services, Corporate Services, Public Health, Community and Neighbourhood Services and Works and Emergency Services) that will develop a comprehensive work plan to support and monitor the implementation of the recommendations in this report.		1 a	<p>Staff of the Toronto Food Policy Council and the Social Development and Administration Division of Community and Neighbourhood Services co-ordinated the overall implementation strategy.</p> <p>An interdepartmental staff group co-ordinated implementation through their respective departments. This collaboration helped staff to identify new opportunities to work together on a wide range of food security initiatives extending beyond the recommendations of <i>The Growing Season</i>.</p>		

Appendix B: Definitions of community gardens, community kitchens and farmers' markets

Community gardens

Community gardens are outdoor spaces on public or private lands, where neighbours meet to grow and care for vegetables, flowers and native plant species. The gardeners take initiative and responsibility for organizing, maintaining and managing the garden area. Community gardens can also include skills development and/or job training components.

Community gardening extends beyond individual food production. Many community gardeners participate in the *Grow a Row, Plant a Row* program by donating some of their harvest to food banks or local community food programs.

Allotment gardens are also viewed as a type of community garden. These gardens involve individual use of a designated piece of land, often with a fee for use attached.

Community kitchens

Community kitchens are community-based cooking programs in which small groups of people meet to pool their resources, cook together, eat together and produce low-cost, nutritious meals to take home for themselves and their families. The term community kitchen is used interchangeably with cooking clubs, dining clubs, sharing kitchens or collective kitchens.

Community kitchens are usually held in a communal area — a church kitchen, a kitchen off to the side of an apartment lobby, a kitchen in

a community recreation centre, for example. Community kitchens can also be outside. Baking ovens in parks, for example, are becoming increasingly popular.

Community kitchens are member-driven and are as diverse as the people involved with them — multicultural, vegetarian, singles to families, shelter kitchens, and school and community kitchens.

Farmers' markets

Farmers' markets offer locally grown produce as well as flowers, baked goods, preserves and condiments. These markets are usually located in public spaces such as streets, city squares, parks, community centres, parking lots and church grounds. Vendors use the space on a short-term basis, leaving the space available for other functions at other times during the week.

The community functions of a farmers' market do not necessarily require the farmer to tend the stall. In some circumstances, vendors licensed to buy food strictly from local farmers can actually increase the sales of locally produced food by taking that food to areas of the city where few supermarkets exist. If vending licenses are given to people from the neighbourhood being served, they can also stimulate employment and entrepreneurial skills in that area. Therefore, it is proposed that the definition of a farmers' market allow for the encouragement of some non-farmer vendors in areas of the city where farmers' markets play a critical role in increasing access to locally grown food by people in under-served neighbourhoods.

In what may be termed a new generation of farmers' markets, community economic development initiatives are encouraged. These markets are particularly successful in low-income communities. Permitting the sale of handmade crafts, and of microprocessor-prepared foods that can meet public health standards, is appropriate in these situations.

