



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Proposal for Development of a Toronto Food Strategy

Date:	June 2, 2008
To:	Board of Health
From:	Medical Officer of Health
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report proposes a plan for developing a Food Strategy for the City of Toronto; presents the “State of Toronto’s Food” discussion paper that formed the basis of preliminary consultations on the feasibility and appropriateness of a strategy; and provides an overview of existing food-related activities in Toronto.

The goal of a Toronto Food Strategy is to develop an action plan to improve the food system to better support good nutrition, healthy development and disease prevention, poverty reduction and social justice, a strong local economy, environmental protection and climate change action, and the promotion and celebration of culture and community through food. Achieving these goals will require a collaborative process that includes a wide range of City divisions and community partners.

Toronto experiences high rates of obesity and diabetes, too many families that are unable to put enough nutritious food on the table, and a food system that under-serves many ethno-racial and Aboriginal populations. The excessive marketing of unhealthy foods to children, the contribution of the food system to climate change and the viability of agricultural lands surrounding Toronto are also immediate concerns. While most elements of the food system are directed and regulated by provincial and federal governments or the private sector, the City of Toronto has opportunities to influence food systems locally, to use food activities to meet other urban priorities, and exert influence as an advocate and champion. Other local and regional governments around the world are developing and implementing food strategies.

A preliminary consultation on the feasibility and appropriateness of a Toronto Food Strategy found an overall positive response with many stakeholders expressing the need for urgent changes as well as a long-term comprehensive process. The Food Strategy

will flow from an analysis of each stage of the food system through a health lens, broadly defined in terms of nutrition and disease prevention, poverty and social justice, economic development; the environment and climate change, and culture and community building. The structure for developing the strategy will be multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary, with expertise and input from a wide range of food sectors. The process will ensure input from councillors, senior City staff, community members, academic institutions, the Toronto Food Policy Council and other food issue experts. It is anticipated that a draft Toronto Food Strategy can be completed by winter 2008/09 with a public consultation process in spring 2009.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The Board of Health endorse the development of a Toronto Food Strategy
2. The Medical Officer of Health convene a Toronto Food Strategy Steering Group to develop a draft Toronto Food Strategy for broad stakeholder consultation and engagement
3. The Medical Officer of Health report to the Board of Health on the status of the Toronto Food Strategy by spring 2009

Financial Impact

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Resources to support the development of the Toronto Food Strategy will be within the Toronto Public Health Operating Budget for 2008/09.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Toronto Public Health (TPH) is spearheading the development of a Food Strategy for Toronto. The strategy will result in an action plan that will improve the food system in favour of nutrition and disease prevention, poverty reduction and social justice, a strong local economy, environmental protection and climate change action related to food, and the promotion and celebration of culture and community. Achieving these goals will require a collaborative process that includes a wide range of City divisions and community partners.

The need for improvements to Toronto's food system is clear. The city experiences alarming rates of obesity and diabetes, too many families that are unable to put enough nutritious food on the table, rising food prices, and a food system that under serves many ethno-racial and Aboriginal populations. The excessive marketing of unhealthy foods to children, the contribution of the food system to climate change and the viability of agricultural lands surrounding Toronto are also immediate concerns.

While most elements of the food system are directed and regulated by provincial and federal governments or the private sector, local government has an important role to play.

Toronto has many opportunities to influence food systems locally, and as the sixth largest government in Canada it also has considerable influence as a food advocate and champion. For example, Toronto can leverage its multimillion dollar annual food purchasing budget in favour of local and sustainable food choices, support the viability of the local food and beverage industry, implement policies to reduce food waste through reducing food and packaging waste and increasing composting, promote farmers markets and community gardens across the city, and use food to connect people by supporting a range of food events and celebrations.

Governments in Canada lack an overarching food policy that makes health a priority. Current food policy, at the local, provincial and federal levels is generally articulated by fragmented pieces of regulation, policy and programming. The Toronto Food Strategy represents a purposeful effort to develop a coherent action plan to improve the local food system in favour of the determinants of health, to inspire actions by other governments, as well as developing further community and academic partnerships in the process.

The City of Toronto and community organizations have a long history of implementing creative solutions related to food. In 1991, Toronto became one of the first cities to sponsor a food policy council. The Toronto Food Policy Council's (TFPC) research, advocacy and publications are recognized internationally, and Toronto's leadership role in municipal food policy is widely acknowledged. The Food and Hunger Action Committee was formed in 1999 to study food security in Toronto and recommend ways to reduce hunger, improve the nutritional health of Torontonians, and support food-based initiatives that benefit Toronto's economy, environment and quality of life. In 2001, City Council adopted the Toronto Food Charter which highlights the City's commitment to food security and "to champion the right of all residents to adequate amounts of safe, nutritious, culturally-acceptable food without the need to resort to emergency food providers".

Toronto has at least 144 community food organizations, including FoodShare and the Stop Community Food Centre which are internationally recognized for their innovative, multifaceted, long-term approaches to addressing hunger and food security issues and promoting access to affordable, nutritious food for all residents. In light of the increased public awareness of food issues and the challenges our food system is facing, the time is ripe to develop a comprehensive, coordinated action plan for Toronto's food. The Toronto Food Strategy will build on the city's long history of achievements in food policy and advocacy.

COMMENTS

This report proposes a plan for the development of a Toronto Food Strategy, presents the discussion paper that formed the basis of the preliminary consultations on the feasibility and appropriateness of a strategy, and provides an overview of existing food-related activities in the City of Toronto, the community and Toronto school boards (included as Appendices B, C, D and E).

The food strategy will identify specific goals, recommendations and actions related to many aspects of the food system. Actions will focus locally and may also include recommendations to other levels of government, the private sector and the community. The City has some direct influence on Toronto's food systems, such as a multimillion dollar annual food purchasing budget, food safety programs to reduce the incidence of food borne illness, providing public education and food skills development, enabling a supportive environment for local food businesses, promoting social cohesion, inclusive policies toward New Canadians and ethno-racial minorities, access to nutritious food through community gardens, farmers' and community markets, and sponsoring celebrations of diverse food through festivals and events. In areas where the City does not have jurisdiction to change food policies directly, it can assume a leadership role and facilitate public awareness and support for progressive food policy.

Many cities around the world are now committing to change their local food systems. In the U.K., the London Food Strategy was launched in 2006 to realize the vision of a "world-class sustainable city". The Strategy has influenced, and was itself inspired by, similar activities in cities such as Glasgow, Manchester, Amsterdam, Seoul, Hartford, Chicago, Vancouver and Toronto. The implementation of the strategy includes a local food infrastructure project, a series of local food events and festivals, training programs for school and hospital staff in procuring and preparing healthy, seasonal food, and support for an environmentally friendly restaurant program.

The process of developing the Toronto Food Strategy is intended to be an instrument for positive change itself, by fostering collaboration, education, public awareness and consensus building. This will happen as a result of insights and partnerships that flow from connecting City divisions, organizations and activities related to food and facilitating innovative partnerships. It will also happen by alignment of food-related policies across the city (e.g. consistent policy for community gardens and farmers' markets). The process may also identify issues for immediate action or referral to others for action. This approach allows meaningful changes to continue to be implemented without waiting until the Food Strategy is completed. The approach also respects the enormous number of food-related activities already happening in Toronto. A food strategy is intended to enhance the effectiveness of all of these efforts through better coordination, new partnerships, local government support and an increased public profile of food issues.

As a first step in the process, TPH staff drafted a background paper, entitled "The State of Toronto's Food". The paper highlights current trends related to a broad range of food system activities, from "grow it" to "throw it". This includes food production, processing, distribution, retail, purchasing, preparation, consumption and disposal.

TPH distributed the "State of Toronto's Food" discussion paper to approximately 50 community and City contacts from a wide range of sectors beginning in November 2007. There were discussions with TPH staff who engage in a range of food-related issues, including nutrition, health promotion and food safety. Staff working on the Toronto Drug Strategy and informants from the London Food Strategy also provided valuable advice.

The Toronto Food Policy Council reviewed drafts of the paper and provided advice to staff during its development.

Feedback was requested on the feasibility and appropriateness of developing a food strategy and, more specifically, on the following six questions:

1. Does the State of Toronto's Food discussion paper accurately represent current issues and trends? If not, what's missing?
2. In the next couple of years, where do you see the greatest opportunity to make progress on the issues outlined in the paper?
3. What would you like to see a Toronto Food Strategy accomplish?
4. What organization(s) or individual(s) is(are) best positioned to provide leadership in the development of a Toronto Food Strategy?
5. How should key stakeholders be involved? What kind of process would be most effective? What supports are required to make this happen (please be realistic!)?
6. Would you participate in developing a Toronto Food Strategy? How could such a strategy assist your work? What could you contribute?

The majority of recipients responded with comments in writing or met in person or by phone with TPH staff. Based on feedback from key stakeholders, the paper has been revised and enhanced and is attached as Appendix F. The feedback received has also informed the directions and recommendations in this report. A summary of feedback received through the consultation is presented in Appendix A.

Proposed Health-Focused Food System Analysis

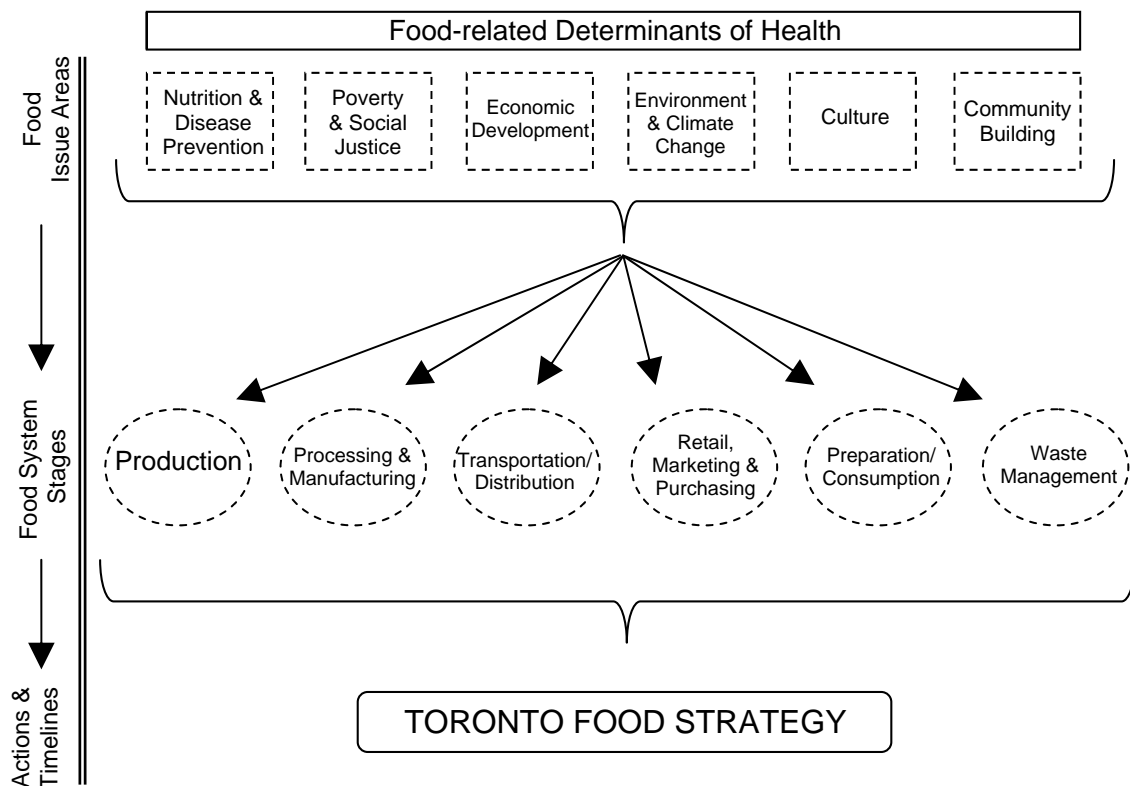
The development of the food strategy will flow from an integrated health-focused analysis of each stage of the food system (see Figure 1 below). The analysis is based on the commitments made in the Toronto Food Charter. Each stage will be analyzed through the lens of the following influences on health: nutrition and disease prevention; poverty and social justice; economic development; environment and climate change; culture and community building. For example, what are the implications of food production (including rural, urban and peri-urban food production) for nutrition and disease prevention among Torontonians? Or, how can Toronto harness actions that are aimed at addressing traditional urban priorities (economic development, planning processes, zoning bylaws, etc.) so that they support better access to nutritious food for low income families?

The primary task will be to identify the most effective actions that can be taken by Toronto's local government, community organizations, businesses and citizens to maximize the contribution of the local food system to nutrition and disease prevention, poverty reduction and social justice, a strong local economy, environmental protection and climate change action, the promotion and celebration of culture and community building.

The analysis and identification of actions will require addressing other key questions, such as:

- What policies and practices already exist locally?
- What evidence is there that proposed actions will be effective?
- Who has authority to make changes? Who has influence?
- What/who are the priority issues, venues and populations?
- Where are the opportunities for successes in the short-term?
- What new partnerships are needed for success?
- What are the research gaps that need to be addressed?
- What resources are needed to implement proposed actions?
- Do key players have the capacity to act? Do they need training or expert support?
- How will we know if we're moving forward? How will we revise our approach, if needed?

Figure 1 – Health-Focused Food System Analysis



Proposed Food Strategy Development Structure

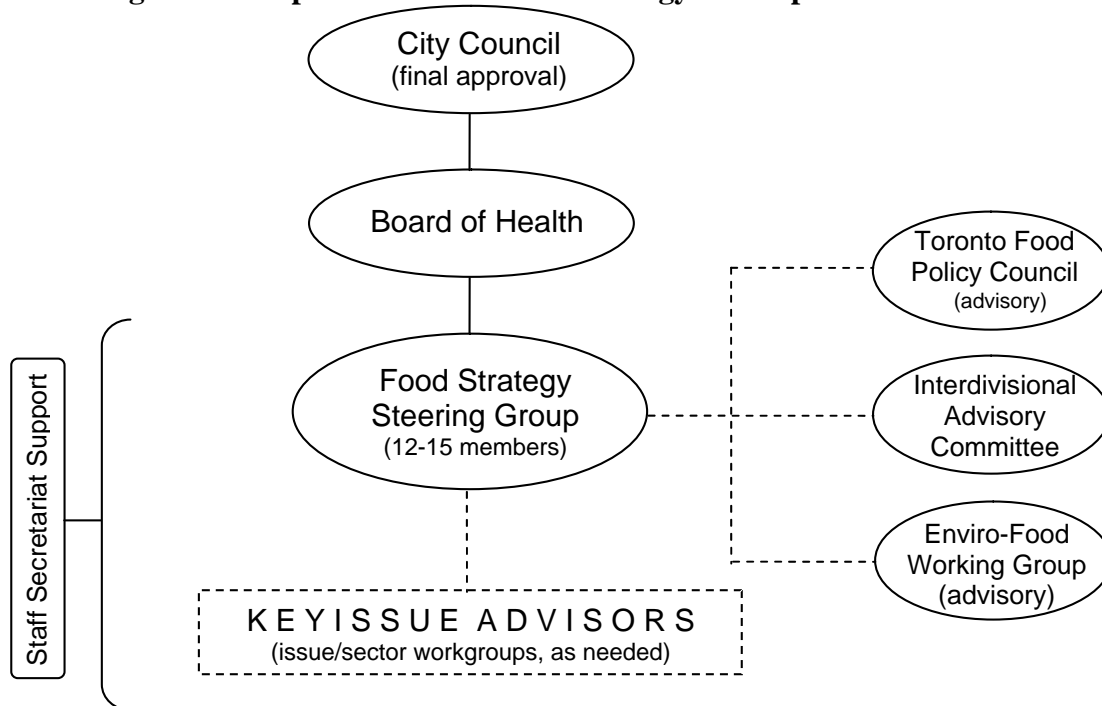
The proposed structure for developing the strategy will be multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary, with expertise and input from a wide range of food sectors. The food strategy will be developed through committees and advisory groups that actively engage Board of Health members, City Councillors, senior City staff, community stakeholders and other issue experts. An overview of the proposed structure is provided as Figure 2.

Following a broad public consultation, a final Toronto Food Strategy will be submitted to City Council for approval. The central coordinating body will be the Food Strategy Steering Group chaired by the Medical Officer of Health. This group will include 12-15 members, including senior City staff, key individuals from the community, food producers and academics. Its mandate will be to oversee the development of a draft strategy, identify goals, recommendations, actions and priorities, assess consultation feedback, approve the final food strategy and submit it to the Board of Health and City Council. Detailed terms of reference will be produced to identify the specific tasks, timelines and direction for the Steering Group’s work.

TPH staff will support the Steering Group’s work and draft the food strategy report in collaboration with key issue advisors from a broad range of food sectors. Advisors will be consulted individually or through key issue workgroups which will be convened as needed. Advisors will provide advice to staff and will help identify specific recommendations and actions for the strategy to be considered by the Steering Group.

An Interdivisional Advisory Committee will also be formed to engage other City divisions and Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs). The City’s Enviro-Food Working Group and the Toronto Food Policy Council will have an advisory role to the Steering Group, providing input on key issues, strategy and facilitating linkages. TFPC involvement is a critical component because it has been the leading voice for food policy issues and action within local government since 1991, sponsoring public education, coalition building and networking to facilitate collaboration among a broad range of food system sectors.

Figure 2 - Proposed Toronto Food Strategy Development Structure



Consultation Process

A draft Food Strategy will undergo a broad public consultation and community engagement process once it is completed by the Food Strategy Steering Group. The consultation should be conducted via multiple channels, including public forums, facilitated workshops, and web-based feedback. Forums and workshops will need to reach out to voices from all sectors of the food system and all food issue areas. Staff should collect feedback from homogenous groups (e.g. food producers session) as well as from mixed groups (e.g. mix of producers, food bank workers, food processors, etc.) to build unique partnerships, spark new ideas and ensure that the strategy takes an integrated approach.

It is anticipated that a draft food strategy can be completed by winter 2008/09 with a public consultation process in spring 2009.

CONCLUSION

The City of Toronto and community organizations have a long history of implementing creative local solutions related to food. The increased public awareness of food issues coupled with the challenges our food system is facing, makes the time ripe to develop a comprehensive, coordinated action plan for Toronto's food systems. Developing a Toronto Food Strategy will require the involvement of many sectors and build on the city's long history of achievements in food policy and advocacy. The commitments made in the Toronto Food Charter provide a strong foundation for this initiative.

A preliminary consultation found an overall positive response with many expressing the need for urgent changes as well as a long-term comprehensive process. The Food Strategy will flow from an analysis of each stage of the food system through a health lens, broadly defined. The strategy development structure will be multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary, with expertise and input from a wide range of sectors. A broad public consultation process and engagement in developing a strategy will also be critical. It is anticipated that a draft food strategy can be completed by winter 2008/09 with a public consultation process in spring 2009.

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ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A: Summary of Consultation on “The State of Toronto’s Food” Discussion Paper
- Appendix B: Overview of Existing Municipal Food-related Activities
- Appendix C: Overview of Existing Community Food-related Activities
- Appendix D: Overview of Existing Toronto Public Health Food-related Activities
- Appendix E: Overview of Toronto School Board Food and Nutrition Initiatives
- Appendix F: The State of Toronto’s Food: Discussion Paper for a Toronto Food Strategy

Appendix A

Summary of Consultation on “The State of Toronto’s Food” Discussion Paper (discussion paper included as Appendix F)

In general, readers found the discussion paper very helpful and felt it was a useful, accessible compilation of available information and analysis of the state of Toronto’s food. Some highlighted relevant issues that were either missing or deserved more emphasis. These include breastfeeding, oral health, water and soil management, and the impact of international trade rules. At the same time, contacts recognized that the purpose of the paper was not to explore the great depth and complexity that so many food issues have.

Contacts cited numerous goals for a food strategy but four themes were most common. The need to raise the profile and availability of local sustainable food was repeated often. Some recommended a City-wide local food procurement policy, expansions to local food processing infrastructure, and more resources and better infrastructure for community gardens. Second, many cited the need to create more opportunities for children and youth to become connected with their food through food growing, being taught cooking skills and learning where their food comes from. Addressing the unacceptable levels of food insecurity and hunger in Toronto was also referenced by many as a key priority for any food strategy. Finally, the theme of ethnocultural populations and food came up frequently. Some suggested initiatives to grow more culturally appropriate foods locally and finding ways to tap into the skills and knowledge not just of recent immigrants but also of Aboriginal populations.

Many agreed that strong leadership would be needed to develop and implement an effective food strategy. The Mayor’s office was seen as a key champion for the strategy to be successful. TPH was also identified several times as a leader in the process, in part because of its commitments thus far and because health issues are key reasons for improvements to the food system. Other key organizations cited were the Toronto Food Policy Council, Foodshare, The STOP Community Food Centre, school boards and the Toronto Environment Office.

There was consensus that the process will require a multisectoral, interdisciplinary approach with voices from a broad range of food interests. A broad public consultation will also be essential. Many noted that ongoing staff support will be needed to see the project through to its completion.

Among those who responded to the preliminary consultation, all expressed a willingness to participate in the process in some capacity.

Overall, there was a positive response to the idea of a Toronto Food Strategy. Most felt it was timely, and many emphasized a sense of urgency in making changes happen. Concerns were also raised, such as the question of the City’s resources in being able to develop and implement a strategy, and the limited powers that Toronto has over the food

system in comparison to other levels of government and the private sector. Although it was understood to be a long-term project, there was also a strong sense of the importance of short-term goals and early demonstrations of meaningful change to create enthusiasm and support for longer term actions.

Appendix B

Overview of Existing Municipal Food-related Activities

In the spring of 2008, TPH staff conducted a high level scan of existing City of Toronto and community food initiatives. The information presented below is not intended as a comprehensive list of activities, but an introduction to existing policies and practices and an update to the scan completed by the Food and Hunger Action Committee in its May 2000 report.

Contents

- Economic Development, Culture and Tourism
- Parks, Forestry and Recreation
- Planning
- Shelter, Support and Housing Administration
- Social Development and Finance Division
- Solid Waste Management
- Toronto Community Housing Corporation
- Toronto Environment Office
- Toronto Food Policy Council
- Toronto Water

Economic Development, Culture and Tourism

The *Toronto Food Business Incubator (TFBI)* was launched in August 2007. The facility provides a range of commercial food processing and packaging equipment and members are instructed on food safety, equipment, business skills training and mentorship. TFBI is stage one of a larger food processing commercialization centre. The *International Food Processing & Innovation Centre (IFPIC)* is a 20 acre site of food grade industrial space for agri-food processing innovation. The Centre will accommodate business start-ups as they become established enterprises and help strengthen the link between rural and urban areas by increasing opportunities for sales of farm products into the local processing industry.

The division has taken the lead on two pilot projects:

1) *Best Practices in Human Resources*

A train-the-trainer project addressing the issue of high turnover rate in the food processing industry. The project will be launched in fall 2008 and will involve 10 food companies. Funding has come from OMAFRA and HRSDC.

2) *New Foundation Skills Development*

A specialized Language Training for Food Processing Industry to develop foundational skills such as English as a second language, literacy and numeracy. The Toronto District School Board will develop the curriculum that is food industry and company specific and provide 20 weeks of instruction for four hours. The program will launch in fall 2008.

Economic Development also oversees the Farmers' Market at Nathan Phillips Square, in existence for 19 years. Any fees collected by the market coordinator are for the purpose of promoting, marketing and operating the farmers' market, e.g., to support complementing events/other programming such as Fresh Wednesdays, entertainment, etc.

The *Fresh Wednesdays* event at Nathan Phillips Square occurs in conjunction with the farmers' market. Three to four food vendors are invited to participate and feature the flavours of cultural foods represented in the city.

Tasty Thursdays at Nathan Phillips Square runs seven Thursdays from July to August. A variety of ten prime Toronto-based restaurants feature select menu items for five dollars or less. In the summer of 2007, 123,000 people participated in the event.

Winterlicious is a program developed and promoted by Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Division on behalf of the restaurant industry. The program is in its sixth year of implementation, concurrent with three other events: Culinary Events; Prix-Fixe promotion; and Chef Series.

PARKS, FORESTRY AND RECREATION (PF&R)

The *Rockcliff Teaching Garden and Greenhouse* site occupies 2.8 acres and is allotted for organic growing and distribution, demonstration gardening, experimental purposes, as well as education and outreach programs. Produce from the garden is distributed to food relief programs/centres, churches and seniors' homes. The TPH Peer Nutrition community garden uses 0.5 acres of land to grow their own cultural vegetables and fruit and PF&R provides expertise, plants and logistical support. Three greenhouses, one operational, contribute to production diversity and research purposes for four-season production [seedlings] and heirloom/heritage and cultural vegetable sets.

The *Toronto Urban Farm* is situated on the Black Creek Pioneer Village lands, with a total acreage of 8.8 acres. A small building on-site will have teaching space, meeting room, storage and kitchen space. This site plays a key role in integrating a farm ecosystem model, social programming and natural environmental protection.

The *High Park Children's Garden* promotes outdoor learning, ecological awareness, hands-on gardening activities, healthy eating/cooking component using produce from the garden. The flagship garden site at High Park has been running for ten years. Activities include: planting and harvesting; soil investigation; plant identification; composting; bug hunts; garden crafts; scavenger hunts. Children learn about cooking/baking measurements, how to modify recipes and how different seasonings can change the flavours of food. PF&R also provides programming specific to schools.

The *Family Garden Drop-In Program* runs once a week for two hours in July and August at the High Park site. The program is open to children up to the age of 12 and children participate in gardening and composting activities, garden games, arts and crafts.

The *Youth Cooking Program* teaches youth, 11-16 years, to prepare vegetarian dishes with harvest from the High Park Children's Garden. Youth learn about the environmental, health and community benefits of using organic and locally grown produce. The food prepared is served the following day at community events. In 2007, the youth were involved in preparing and serving garden harvest lunches to 1,450 parents, children and community members through 3 community events at the High Park Children's Garden.

A *Snack Vending Machine Policy* is being proposed that will increase the range of healthier food choices available in the 141 PF&R operated facilities. The nutrition standards are organized by food group according to *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*.

Under the *Parks Fresh Food Market project*, six farmers' markets are in operation on city-owned parkland during the months of May through to October (Riverdale Farm, Trinity Bellwoods Park, Withrow Park, Dufferin-Grove Park, East Lynn, and Sorauren Park). Each site has a Market Coordinator who oversees the operational aspects of the market. PF&R is also developing a *Parks Fresh Food Market Policy* that will address the requirements and procedures related to requests to establish outdoor Fresh Food Markets on city-owned parkland in order to create a direct producer consumer marketplace.

PLANNING

The Planning Division has proposed guidelines for building height and density incentives under Section 37 of the Planning Act. This allows the City to pass zoning bylaws related to new developments that require "community benefits" as part of the construction. Benefits could include park land, and/or park improvements, such as farmers' markets, land for other municipal purposes, such as community gardens, access to quality grocery stores or alternate food sources or substantial contributions to the urban forest on public lands.

SHELTER, SUPPORT AND HOUSING ADMINISTRATION

In the spring of 2006, preliminary discussions were held among the Daily Bread Food Bank, Second Harvest and Shelter, Support and Housing Administration to explore the feasibility of a *Nutritious Food to Drop-ins pilot project*. The project grew out of the recognition that the meal served to drop-in centre clients was often their only one for the day. Many people depend on this single meal for their daily nutrition and it is critical that the meal is high in essential nutrients to meet daily requirements. However, results from an ongoing study of community-based meal programs in Toronto, conducted by the University of Toronto School of Nutrition, suggest that single meals served by these programs fell short of meeting the estimated daily nutrient requirements for an adult.

The project was implemented in November 2006 and completed in August 2007. The primary goal of the project was to build on existing partnerships and to improve the nutritional quality of meals served to drop-in programs in a cost-effective manner through strategic and creative measures. Registered Dietitians from Toronto Public Health provided nutrition expertise, resources and practical training to the project. In addition,

Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division at the City of Toronto contributed \$240,000 of funding towards the project and provided project guidance and direction.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCE DIVISION

The *Food Security Investment Program (FSIP)* was approved as a new initiative within the Community Partnership and Investment Program in 2005. Its mandate is to support community organizations for activities that improve neighbourhoods, build community capacity, reach vulnerable groups and develop effective models of community-based service to help meet the city's social development goals. The goal of the FSIP is to support a stable food security sector through the provision of ongoing program funding and shorter term capacity building support for three year projects for high needs and under-served communities in Toronto. The priorities are gardens, markets and community kitchens in high needs communities, and coordination and animation to build capacity for addressing needs in new areas. Nine ongoing programs have been approved in each of the first two years for funding for applicants addressing gardens, markets and kitchens. One project was approved for 3-year funding for coordination and animation across the City.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Organic waste from the Toronto *Green Bin Program* is brought to the Dufferin Organics Processing Facility. The organics are visually inspected and large, unwanted items are removed. A hydropulper is used to spin the organics into a liquid pulp. Unwanted materials such as plastic, glass, bones, and stones are removed from this pulp through screening and settling. Anaerobic digestion takes approximately 14 days to convert the pulp into two products: an organic solid material that can be turned into compost; and biogas. The organic solid material is taken to another facility for composting most of the city's digestate at about 5,000 tonnes a year. The digestate must meet the criteria of certain nutrients for further processing by the facility. A number of soil amendment products are produced and the finished compost can be used in landscaping, agriculture, soil erosion control and soil remediation projects.

TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION (TCHC)

TCHC supports the establishment of food-based programs in a number of ways. Since the inception of the Food and Hunger Action Committee, TCHC has worked with the City to identify opportunities and expand community food initiatives for tenants living in social housing. TCHC's Community Business Planning process provides tenants an opportunity to identify local priorities and service gaps. Strategies for responding to these issues are included in local Community Housing Unit Business Plans. The Social Investment Fund allocated \$264,180 to eight community food-based initiatives in 2006. Currently, there are over 175 initiatives underway at 118 TCHC communities. TCHC in its *Social Investment Fund* has allocated \$1 million towards the development, expansion and support of tenant-led community food security initiatives and other community engagement activities.

TORONTO ENVIRONMENT OFFICE (TEO)

The *Enviro-Food Procurement Working Group* is involved in three key activities initiated with Council's adoption of the Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan in July 2007. They include:

- Working with school boards to explore establishing small scale, intensive urban agriculture activities on school grounds;
- Establishing a multistakeholder Enviro-Food Action Team. The team will have a one to two year mandate to develop and implement actions designed to promote the production and consumption of locally grown food; and,
- Developing a local and sustainable food procurement policy for City operations.

TORONTO FOOD POLICY COUNCIL (TFPC)

Since 1991, the TFPC has been a leading voice for system-wide food policy issues and action linked to local governments, sponsoring public education, partnership development and networking to facilitate collaboration among a broad range of food system participants. The TFPC advises the Board of Health, the Medical Officer of Health and City Council on matters relating to sustainable food systems. The TFPC follows an emerging issue management model. It places an emerging issue which is not yet generally recognized, but which may have significant impact on human and/or ecosystem health, at the forefront for thoughtful inquiry and community engagement. It is through the power of ideas and empowered communities that TFPC is able to bring people together to influence and broker ways for solution-based problem solving. The TFPC places at the cutting edge of food policy innovation and is recognized internationally.

Working within the Toronto Food and Hunger Action Committee established by Toronto's newly-amalgamated City Council, the TFPC created the *Toronto Food Charter* which was adopted by City Council in 2001. In 1976, Canada signed the United Nations Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, which includes "the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger." The Food Charter outlines Toronto's civic commitment to that tradition.

The Council formed the *Food and Hunger Action Committee* in 1999 to study food security in Toronto and recommend ways to support food-based initiatives that benefit Toronto's economy, environment and quality of life. The Committee brought together City councillors, City staff, non-profit agencies, volunteers and members of the public. The Committee developed a series of three reports.

The TFPC produces a *daily e-mail information service* which connects 1,500 people involved with food issues. It also co-sponsors *Foodforethought*, another email list, that acts as a dialogue centre for food advocates and features stories that provide an international perspective. The Council contributes to an "eat locally, cook globally" perspective within Toronto's emerging food culture by organizing an annual event celebrating World Food Day.

TFPC spearheaded the *New Canadians, New Farmers Project* to strengthen the capacity of New Canadians to farm using sustainable practices in near-urban areas and address the growing demand for culturally-appropriate food and fresh produce among Southern Ontario's diverse urban communities. This work has been taken up by Farm Start, which provides equipment, infrastructure, training programs and support services to address the needs of all new farmers in Ontario. TFPC members have collaborated with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to support renting out portions of its 40,000-acre holdings to new farmers.

The TFPC has worked with several foundations to encourage funding streams that are directed to food-based organizations. TFPC Project Coordinator sits on the advisory board dealing with "food animation" which helps people develop a sense of community through food and arose from the \$300,000 a year city-funded grants program for community food security projects. Funding for food security projects, almost non-existent ten years ago, is now available through many leading foundations serving Ontario and Toronto. Funding will help green farm operations through reduced pesticide use, improved waste management, decreased water pollution, new habitat for wildlife and keep family farms productive, profitable and environmentally responsible.

TORONTO WATER

City Council approved a budget reallocation in 2006 of \$200,000 to implement the *Green Roof Incentive Pilot Program*, increasing the amount of rooftop food growing in the city. Based on the success of the original pilot program, a new program was initiated for 2007 with City Council support. Sixteen successful applicants received funding as part of the original Green Roof Incentive Pilot Program for 2006. The program will result in the construction of a variety of green roof types which could be used for education and promotional purposes, provide an opportunity to showcase various green roof technologies and planting styles, and provide a grant of \$50 per square metre of eligible green roof area.

Appendix C

Overview of Existing Community Food-related Activities

The information presented below is not intended as a comprehensive list of activities, but an introduction to existing policies and practices and an update to the scan completed by the Food and Hunger Action Committee in its May 2000 report. Some information is presented by activity type and, due to the multifaceted nature of their approaches, the activities of some key community organizations are summarized separately.

CONTENTS

Activity Type

- Meal and Emergency Food Programs
- Food Skills Training
- Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Initiatives
- Entrepreneurship
- Events/Festivals

Selected Key Community Organizations

- Daily Bread Food Bank
- Evergreen
- FoodShare
- Local Food Plus
- North York Harvest Food Bank
- Second Harvest
- The Stop Community Food Centre

Activity Type

Meal and Emergency Food Programs

Congregate Dining Programs offer individuals the opportunity to share a hot meal and socialize with others. Many of the programs aim to bring together frail or isolated seniors. However, there are also agencies that offer community meal programs for disabled people, families, children, mental health consumers and rooming house tenants. There are close to 50 programs in Toronto.

Meals on Wheels is a patchwork of programs delivered by close to 40 different agencies throughout the city. The programs deliver hot or frozen meals for a small fee.

Emergency Food Programs in Toronto include 89 food banks. The Daily Bread Food Bank and North York Harvest Food Bank collect, sort and package food for distribution to food programs and agencies across the city. There are also other agencies such as the Salvation Army and some church groups that run independent food banks. Food recovery programs, such as Second Harvest, pick up excess perishable food and delivers it daily to

social agencies across Toronto. Meal programs also provide emergency access to food by offering meals via drop in centres, shelters, Out of the Cold programs, street outreach programs (e.g. Na-Me-Res) and other community agencies. There are 62 drop in centres and 60 shelters in Toronto and over 180 emergency food and meal programs. Recent research suggests that approximately 20,000 meals/snacks were served via emergency food programs on a specific day being studied.

Food Skills Training

Cooking Programs and Community Kitchens

Numerous agencies across Toronto provide cooking programs, community kitchens and/or workshops related to food skills. In some programs, participants cook and share a meal together, while other programs involve cooking larger amounts of food that participants are able to take home with them. The Stop Community Food Centre, Scadding Court, Agincourt Community Services Association and some community health centres are some that offer communal cooking groups and community kitchen style programs.

Job Skills Training

Many community agencies also offer programs that provide job skills for the food industry. FoodShare runs a program called Focus on Food, where at-risk young people are trained in life skills (including cooking) and job skills that can lead to employment in the food industry. The Harvest Kitchen Program is run in partnership with Second Harvest. There are four kitchens across the city that provide training to individuals facing barriers to employment. Second Harvest provides donated food which the trainees prepare and then Second Harvest redistributes the meals (approx 1600/week) to about 30 of their recipient agencies (including drop-in centres, afterschool programs and congregate dining programs).

The Harvest Kitchens program trains unemployed individuals in food preparation. They work with food service professionals to prepare meals from recovered food which are then delivered to agencies lacking adequate facilities and resources to prepare food. Native Men's Residence also has a youth program, Tumivut Earthkeepers, that provides job readiness skills and hands on experience working in a greenhouse, horticultural and landscaping environment. Daily Bread Food Bank has a 16 week training program for those facing barriers to employment. In addition to this training that prepares individuals to work in the food sector industry, the program produces frozen soups and casseroles which are distributed to member agencies of Daily Bread Food Bank.

Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Initiatives

The Stop educates the community and schools about the benefits of urban agriculture through the Sustainable Food Systems Education program. They also have year round organic food production and other environmental education initiatives. In addition they will be opening their Green Barn later this year, which is a 3000 square-foot greenhouse with a kitchen and classroom. Afri-Can Food Basket engages youth in the community through *Cultivating Youth Leadership (CYL) The Urban Farm Project*. Youth participate in hands on, practical farm/garden work, life skill training and leadership development.

Community Food Animators work with strong neighbourhoods to develop sustainable strategies for community food security in the areas of farmers markets, community gardens, community kitchens and food banks.

FoodShare partners with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) to run The Sunshine Garden, the largest market garden in the City at the CAMH Queen Street site. Twice weekly, from mid-June to October, it sells just-harvested vegetables at a farm stand on Queen St. west of Ossington. In the winter this project produces over 200 kilograms of edible pea and sunflower sprouts in the greenhouse at the Queen Street Site that get distributed to Good Food Box customers.

FoodShare Toronto has a sprouting operation at its Sunshine Garden and works in partnership with the Toronto Beekeepers Cooperative to support beehives that produce honey in the City. All use appropriate technology methods and recycled materials to produce certified organic food and seedlings for sale. This program also allows us to teach others about sustainable food growing methods. In 2008 we will also have on-site demonstration gardens and a new greenhouse producing organic seedlings and sprouts.

The *Good Food Box Program*, operated by FoodShare, is a bulk buying program for healthy food, specifically fresh vegetables and fruit. The boxes are packed and delivered to drop-off points around the city. Approximately 2,500 to 3,000 boxes are distributed on a monthly basis.

Community and School Gardens promote healthy eating, active living and contribute to a healthy environment. There are approximately 120 gardens across the city. FoodShare and Toronto Public Health have partnered together to support the development of 10 new school food gardens, funded by the Toronto Heart Health Partnership. Heart health funds will be used to provide training to teachers/staff and Public Health Nurses about starting a school food garden, as well as start-up garden tool kits.

Farmers' Markets - Toronto has 19 farmers' markets that help connect Torontonians to farmers and offer an opportunity to buy fresh, seasonal, locally-grown foods. Although the majority of these markets are seasonal, Toronto has two all year markets (Dufferin Grove Organic and St. Lawrence). In 2007, Toronto gained six new farmers' markets at various locations across the city. FoodShare also works with community organizations to run Good Food Markets, which are smaller markets, sometimes no more than a single stand that are directly operated by community members in low income communities where there is insufficient revenue to attract a farmer but where there is interest in improved access to healthy food delivered through an open air market. There are over 14 such markets planned for the summer of 2008.

Entrepreneurship

Farm Start runs several initiatives to assist in the development of locally-based, ecologically sound and economically viable agriculture enterprises. The New Farms Incubator program provides supports to new farm enterprises. New Canadians, New Farmers program provides training and support services to address the needs of new

immigrants in the agricultural and farming sectors in Ontario. The program helps to meet the growing demand for culturally-appropriate food and produce. The Toronto Kitchen Incubator (FoodShare) is a fully equipped industrial kitchen that is available to small food businesses for a low hourly rent. It provides an opportunity for small entrepreneurs to work in a commercial kitchen as they start up their business.

Events/Festivals

Food brings people together in celebrations of community and diversity, an important part of the city's culture. Food related events and festivals have been instrumental in reconnecting people with food and the enjoyment of eating, as well as with each other. Events such as the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, World Food Day and Summerlicious/Winterlicious help to connect Torontonians with food. Slow Food Toronto is another example of an association that organizes a variety of food-related events. Afri-Can Food Basket organizes a community appreciation award ceremony (Ujamaa Awards) honouring individuals and community groups involved in community food security and community development in the African Canadian community. Native Men's Residence organizes a Pow Wow in early summer, where traditional music and food is shared with the whole community. In addition, the Canadian Aboriginal Festival Pow Wow held in November is a celebration of native culture, customs and food. The Stop has an annual festival in the fall at Davenport West called Good Food for All. Celebrating the harvest, this festival includes free food, live music, a community fair and children's activities and games.

Selected Key Community Organizations Involved in Food Initiatives

Daily Bread Food Bank

The Daily Bread collects, sorts and packages food for distribution to food programs and member agencies across the GTA (neighbourhood food banks, lunch programs, meal programs). They serve over 75,000 people across 160 member agencies and 190 food relief programs, providing 2,460,310 meals across Toronto over a one year period. They also operate a large institutional kitchen allowing them to process perishable foods into soups, casseroles etc. and deliver to meal programs and school nutrition programs. There is also a foodservices training program for adults at risk that trains them to work in an industrial food processing facility.

Evergreen

Evergreen is a not-for-profit organization that makes cities more livable. By deepening the connection between people and nature, Evergreen is improving the health of our cities now and for the future.

Evergreen motivates people to create and sustain healthy, natural outdoor spaces and gives them the practical tools to be successful through its three core national programs:

- 1) Common Grounds - conserving and stewarding publicly accessible land for food growing and naturalized gardens.

- 2) Learning Grounds - transforming school grounds
- 3) Home Grounds - for home/private owned landscape.

Community Food Gardening – Evergreen gardens are the site of workshops, food education, multiple community agency collaborations and community celebrations. Presently, Evergreen gardens are a part of a seven garden national project promoting and supporting more Canadians to grow food in their cities. Examples of their Toronto based programs include:

- *Fort York Community Garden* – in partnership with the City of Toronto, Friends of Fort York and Evergreen, a new community garden has been created on this historic downtown site. Up to 50 gardeners affiliated with community agencies and community associations in the area are participating.
- *Emmett Avenue Community Garden* – established in the fall 2006 in Eglinton Flats park (Jane and Eglinton).
- *Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Garden* – partnership between Evergreen and the Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training centre. The garden addresses a number of issues, including food security, skills training for Toronto’s Aboriginal people and community building.
- *Eva’s Initiative* – working together to implement habitat and food gardens and related programming at Eva’s transitional housing shelter. Provide educational and skill building opportunities for homeless and at-risk youth.
- *Evergreen Brickworks* – Evergreen is transforming Toronto’s historic Don Valley Brickworks factory from an underused, deteriorating collection of buildings into a thriving environmentally-based community centre that engages visitors in diverse experiences connected to nature. Activities include farmers’ markets, children’s play area and demonstration gardens.
- *Grant programs* – administers multiple national grant programs in partnership with government and corporate bodies. Two of these grants directly support the establishment of community food gardens and related programs in Toronto.

FoodShare Toronto

FoodShare is an organization that works on food issues “from field to table” focusing on the entire food system from growing, processing and distribution of food to purchasing, cooking and consumption. They operate several innovative grassroots projects that promote healthy eating, teach food preparation and cultivation, develop community capacity and create non-market-based forms of food distribution. Examples of their programs include:

- *Community Garden Leadership Course* – provides assistance to community groups (knowledge, expertise, resources) to start their own garden.
- *Urban Agriculture Program* – includes sprouting operation, rooftop greenhouse and garden, composting system, honey bee hives, offsite urban market garden. Also provides workshops on a variety of Urban Agriculture topics.
- *Urban Market Garden* – CAMH participants grow certified organic vegetables and herbs under supervision of FoodShare staff.

- *Healthy Babies Eat Homecooked Food* – peer trainers provide education to community groups on making one’s own baby food, available in eight languages.
- *Toronto Kitchen Incubator* - fully equipped industrial kitchen available for low hourly rent to small businesses.
- *Fresh Produce Program* - wholesale produce distribution to schools, salad bar projects and community agencies
- *Power Soups and Power Meals for the Homeless* – nutritious meals provided at a subsidized price to local shelters.
- *FoodLink Hotline* -Volunteer-staffed telephone referral service that connects people with food programs in their neighbourhoods. In 2007, Foodlink responded to calls from approximately 500 people per month.
- *Field to Table Catering* offers an eclectic menu of fresh, healthy, affordable, multi-culturally sensitive and seasonal foods for sale to community organizations and others seeking catering for events of any size.
- *Cooking Out of the Box* training workshops teach people of all ages and income levels how to cook fresh, healthy, affordable, multiculturally sensitive meals.
- Through the *Field to Table Schools* program students from JK to Grade 12 learn about composting, school food gardens, nutrition, basic cooking skills, local and global food systems through hands on cooking, gardening, composting and bee-keeping.

Local Food Plus (LFP)

Local Food Plus is committed to building local sustainable food systems by certifying farmers and processors and linking them with local purchasers. LFP certifies farmers and processors who produce food in environmentally and socially responsible ways and opens new markets for them by linking them to local purchasers. Staff work with institutions and food service companies to develop supply chains that foster local sustainable food systems. LFP also educates consumers and others about the benefits of local sustainable food systems.

North York Harvest Food Bank

North York Harvest sorts and distributes close to one million pounds of food annually to 65 programs across the city. On average they serve approximately 17,000 people monthly through their agency network. In addition, the organization offers:

- The *Making Connections* community project which seeks to improve the consumption of fresh and locally grown vegetables and fruit. Through Making Connections, the food bank arranges gleaning trips to participating farms, fresh food drives and local produce cooking and education workshops. Three hundred people participated in gleaning trips and picked over 1,000 lbs of produce in the summer of 2007. Over 300 people also participated in educational cooking workshops covering nutrition, food safety and food preservation techniques.
- Information and referral program at select Emergency Hamper programs.
- *Harvest to Hand* community and learning garden. The Harvest to Hand Demonstration Garden is not only about providing food for clients but it is also about providing a space for community members, clients and member agency reps to gather and share their gardening expertise. Individuals and organizations are

- encouraged to begin gardening and increase their access to fresh locally grown fruits and vegetables.
- *Donation Nation*, a youth focused initiative in northern Toronto schools, youth groups, and communities. It fosters the spirit of giving while providing Toronto area youth with educational resources and experiences to help empower and ultimately support those experiencing hunger in their communities. Students and teachers are provided resources to run food drives, workshops, and hands-on sessions both on-site and in-class.

Second Harvest

Second Harvest picks up and prepares excess fresh food and delivers it within hours to 250 social service agencies, such as community centres, shelters, breakfast programs and drop-in centres. The program deals with perishable foods such as fruits, vegetables, milk, and frozen foods, making 14,000 meals available every day. Donors include grocery stores, food manufacturers and distributors. The Feeding our Future summer program, in partnership with Sodexo Foundation, produces nutritious lunches that Second Harvest picks up and delivers to community centres for children attending free summer camps. The Harvest Kitchen trains unemployed individuals in food preparation, providing valuable job skills needed to help them achieve a self sufficient future.

The Stop Community Food Centre (The Stop)

The Stop offers a variety of programs that aim to increase people's access to healthy food in a manner that maintains dignity, builds community and challenges. Programming includes:

- *Urban Agriculture* – year round organic food production and environmental education initiative.
- *Meals Made Easy Community Kitchen* – communal cooking groups, including the Pelham Park Cooking Drop in (monthly program with a focus on seniors with mobility issues), Women's Cooking Group, and a Spanish speaker's group.
- *Food bank* – members receive a 2-3 day supply of food once a month. Approximately 8000 individuals use the food bank annually, totalling 200,000 meals. Fifty-five dedicated volunteers provide 5,000 hours per year of their time.
- *Drop-in programs* – provides nutritious breakfast and lunches. Pizza making drop in outdoor bake oven from June to October via a partnership with the Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Centre.

Appendix D

Overview of Existing Toronto Public Health Food-related Activities

The information presented below is not intended as a comprehensive list of activities, but an introduction to existing policies and practices and an update to the scan completed by the Food and Hunger Action Committee in its May 2000 report. Some information is presented by age group focus and others by activity type.

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- Toronto Heart Health Partnership (THHP)

Prenatal and Infant

Canada Prenatal Nutrition Programs (CPNP)

CPNP is a comprehensive community based program, funded by Health Canada enhancing access to services and strengthening intersectoral collaboration to support the needs of vulnerable pregnant women. TPH Nurses (PHNs) and Registered Dietitians (RDs) provide in-kind support to the 39 CPNP sites throughout Toronto. Through a community development approach, CPNP aims to reduce the incidence of unhealthy birth weights, improve the health of both infant and mother; and encourage breastfeeding. The services provided include: nutrition and health education, social support, food supplementation, referral and counselling on health and lifestyle issues. PHNs and RDs collaborate with community partners to deliver these services through group facilitation and individual service.

Healthiest Babies Possible Program

The goal of the program is to contribute to healthy birth weights among nutritionally at-risk pregnant women living in Toronto. The program is a prenatal primary prevention program which provides culturally competent 1:1 intensive nutrition counselling for pregnant women less than 28 weeks gestation that are at nutritional risk of having a LBW baby. Based on a nutritional assessment, prenatal multi-vitamin and mineral supplements and food certificates are also provided. These interventions help to supplement their nutrient intake and to increase access to nutritious food, needed for healthy fetal growth and cognitive development. About 1,700 women enter the program each year, and about 1,300 women complete the program each year.

Healthy Babies Healthy Children

HBHC is a prevention and early intervention initiative to provide support and services to families with children from before birth up to six years of age. Public health nurses assess the needs of new parents and make sure families are linked to the most suitable resources in their community. This may include referral to a service agency or, if appropriate, a family home visitor who provides support and parenting skills to new moms in their own languages and provides links to community services. Often TPH Public Health Nurses and Family Home Visitors are providing support on infant feeding (including breastfeeding) and introduction to solid foods as well as supporting parents with food and nutrition information for toddlers and preschoolers. As a pilot project, TPH staff are providing food coupons to high risk families. Healthy Families address child poverty and food insecurity at policy and advocacy levels.

Early Childhood

Peer Nutrition Program

Peer Nutrition is offered to parents and caregivers from ethnically and culturally diverse communities in Toronto. The primary goal of the program is to enhance the nutritional status of children between the ages of 6 months to 6 years. The program also aims to improve access to nutrition programs and reduce the social isolation of newly-arrived immigrants and other economically-disadvantaged parenting groups. Programs are offered in over 30 languages. The program works in partnership with other community agencies to deliver services. The program consists of 6-10 educational workshops, as well as nutrition support groups/drop-in locations for graduates of the program in various community sites throughout the City. The program reaches over 2,000 parents yearly in the educational workshop sessions, and about 900 parents attend the nutrition support groups/drop-ins yearly. The Program addresses food security issues through activities such as coordinating community gardens and increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables for its participants.

Healthy Measures Workshops for Child Care Providers

The goal of the Healthy Measures Program for Childcare providers is to provide training to child care staff and volunteers focusing on promoting and integrating consistent healthy weights messages into their work. The workshop's objective is to increase awareness about how our own attitudes and behaviours influence children's attitudes and behaviours about healthy eating, physical activity and self-esteem.

Rainbow Fun

Rainbow Fun has been developed for childcare providers, educators and parents to help them engage children ages 3 to 6 in activities related to physical activity, healthy eating and self-esteem. The goals are to improve the nutritional health status of children 3-6 years of age resulting in optimal growth and development and to develop fundamental physical activity and social skills needed for a lifetime of physical activity.

Food Security in the Early Years

As part of provincial Early Childhood Development funding, work was undertaken by a Research Consultant from 2004-2006 to inform advocacy work on food security and early years populations. A background report "Food Security: Implications for the Early Years" was completed and recommendations were adopted by the Board of Health in February 2006. The report highlighted definitions of food security, its measurement at the household level, and the health implications of household food insecurity for children and their families. The report also situated food insecurity and the early years within the context of broader economic, food system and food policy influences.

School-Aged Children and Youth

Student Nutrition Programs for Children and Youth

The Student Nutrition Program is the largest grants program administered by Toronto Public Health, in partnership with both school boards, their foundations and FoodShare Toronto. In 2006/2007, Toronto subsidized 497 breakfast, lunch and snack programs in schools and community sites and 84,597 snacks and meals were served. Student Nutrition Programs enhance consumption of vegetables, fruit, whole grains and milk products, helping to ensure adequate nutrient intake while modeling healthier food choices to reduce the future risk of chronic diseases. The City shares the cost of Student Nutrition Programs with the province in addition to parental contributions and community fundraising. In 2006/2007, 1,406 volunteers worked in Student Nutrition Programs for a total of 177,677 volunteer hours.

Discover Healthy Eating!

Discover Healthy Eating! is a resource to support teachers of grades 1 to 8 to implement the healthy eating component of the 1998 Ontario Health and Physical Education curriculum. It was developed through collaboration among Toronto Public Health, Peel Region Public Health and York Region Health Services.

Take Action Towards Healthy Eating in Schools

The Take Action initiative supports schools in developing a healthy eating environment which may include healthier food choices sold in the school or for fundraising, healthy school food policies, and healthy eating messaging to parents and students. A Take Action package is provided to schools and it contains resources for creating and promoting a healthy eating environment. There is also a Take Action presentation for elementary and middle schools designed to help parents and/or school administrators learn about healthy eating for school-age children and help them plan and implement strategies to create a healthy eating environment at school. A Healthy Lunch Workshop gives parents and caregivers knowledge and skills to select healthy foods and beverages for children's lunches.

Healthy Weights Children and Youth

The Healthy Weights Children and Youth initiatives include two unique programs aimed at children and youth, as well as their teachers and parents. The Rethink What You Drink interactive workshop challenges youth to think about what influences their beverage choices and to make beverage choices with the goal of energy balance in mind. The workshop emphasizes the impacts of sugar-sweetened beverages on bone and dental health as well as energy imbalances which lead to unhealthy weights. The Who Are You? program promotes a healthy body image for males and females. As part of an interactive display and workshop, youth are engaged in discussions about healthy eating, physical activity, self-esteem and lifestyle issues. The interactive display is designed to: raise awareness about the factors that influence body image; educate youth about health promoting behaviours; and stimulate discussion on healthy lifestyle choices.

Munch Bunch Club

The Munch Bunch Club is a free nutrition and physical activity club open to all children aged 6-12 years who live in Toronto. The goal is to contribute to the achievement of lifelong healthy eating and physical activity patterns, while encouraging positive self-esteem. Four times a year, Club members receive a kid-focused newsletter through the mail. Every newsletter has information about food and nutrition, physical activity, jokes, puzzles, and contests. There are nearly 4,000 club members.

Eat Smart! Awards of Excellence

The Eat Smart! program recognizes restaurants and cafeterias that offer healthier food choices on the menu and by request, a smoke free environment and the highest standards in food safety. TPH implements this provincial program in Toronto restaurants, workplace cafeterias and school cafeterias. In workplaces and schools, the Eat Smart! program is offered as part of a comprehensive environmental approach to healthy eating. In the 2007/2008 school year, 15 middle and high school cafeterias were awarded the Eat Smart! award.

Adults

Nutrition @ Work

This workplace program promotes a comprehensive approach to nutrition programming. Toronto Public Health consults with the workplace to assess the whole environment, identify its priorities and develop a plan of action customized to the unique needs of workplaces. Action plan activities include both environment and education activities. The first phase of the plan will include environmental support activities followed by phase two, the education and skill building activities. The Nutrition program is currently active in 25 workplaces.

Colour It Up! Program

Colour It Up! is a province-wide nutrition program designed to increase vegetable and fruit consumption among women aged 25-45 and their families. TPH has adapted and enhanced the provincial 6-session program in order to provide a more hands-on food skills component, essential for supporting women to increase the variety and amount of vegetables and fruit they buy, prepare, eat and serve their families. The program runs for 8 sessions and targets women as the key decision-makers about what foods are purchased and served to the family. Participants are given incentives to encourage and reinforce behaviour changes. Incentives include fresh vegetables and fruit, kitchen utensils related to preparing vegetables and fruit (e.g. vegetable peeler, garlic press, etc.) and other items (e.g. aprons). This program is currently being run 4 times per year, with each program reaching approximately 15 women.

Healthy Choices for Life

This program is for adults over the age of 18 living or working in the City of Toronto who are looking to learn the basics of nutrition and physical activity. The 2-hour program runs for 9 consecutive weeks. One hour is facilitated by a Registered Dietitian and one

hour is facilitated by a Certified Fitness Instructor. The Dietitian discusses topics such as creating healthy meals and snacks, portion sizes, label reading, and healthy attitudes.

Food Skills

Cooking in the Community Consulting Resources is a toolkit designed to be used with community groups that are starting a food skills program, implementing a food skills program and need support, interested in improving their knowledge around food safety, and/or requiring food related activities for children and adults. The toolkit is used by TPH staff to provide informal food skills training to community groups or agencies on a consultative basis. TPH is in the pilot-phase of three new food skills modules on the topics of Menu Planning, Food Shopping and Food Budgeting. These food skills modules are being geared to the needs of youth who are self-reliant and who have limited food-related skills.

TPH also co-facilitates training for staff members who work in the area of food preparation and service in City-run and City-funded hostels and shelters in Toronto. Hostel Services staff are required to attend this training within six months of being hired. The purpose of the workshops is to provide training on the Food Safety and Nutrition Standards of the *Toronto Shelter Standards*. These standards set out minimum requirements related to food, nutrition and food safety for city-run/funded hostels and shelters in Toronto and were developed with involvement from TPH staff. The training is organized and administered by the Toronto Hostels Training Centre and is run 2-4 times per year.

Community Gardening Projects

Various gleaning and community gardening projects are run in partnership with community agencies throughout the City. This service builds and nurtures community capacity to improve nutrition and physical activity and enhance community food security. TPH is working in a community development and consultative capacity in partnership with Foodshare and other organizations to develop standards for food sold at farmers markets.

Food Policy Initiatives

The Nutritious Food Basket is a standardized food costing tool that measures the cost of healthy eating based on recommendations set by *Canada's Food Guide* and *Nutrition Recommendations*. Every Health Unit in Ontario is mandated to cost out a Nutritious Food Basket on an annual basis. Toronto Public Health has been conducting the Nutritious Food Basket survey annually since 1998 to monitor the cost of healthy eating in the City of Toronto. Each year, a report is submitted to the Board of Health, and includes recommendations for the development of policies and initiatives that support community food security and income adequacy in Toronto. As a supplement to the Board of Health report, a newsletter is produced to highlight findings from the survey; and is distributed to community agencies and partners as an awareness and advocacy tool.

Toronto Public Health's Planning and Policy Directorate employs a full time Nutrition Promotion Consultant and the Coordinator of the Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC's work is highlighted in Appendix B).

TPH and Parks, Forestry and Recreation have been working together to improve the nutritional quality of foods available for sale in recreation centres, community centres, parks and arenas. This has resulted in a mandated level of healthier food and beverage choices for sale in vending machines. Fifty percent of cold beverages and 25-50% of snack foods and hot beverages will have to meet definitions of "healthier choice". Once the existing contracts for snack bar operators expire, Toronto Public Health hopes to expand the food policy to include healthier food and beverages sold in snack bars.

Nutrition Monitoring at the Population Level

TPH provides advice, input and support on various nutrition monitoring activities at the population level. For example, the Canadian Community Health Survey Cycle 2.2, Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System July 2005 (Nutrition and Fruit and Vegetable Consumption) and the 2002 Ontario Nutrition and Cancer Prevention Survey (nutrition, fruit and vegetable intake, physical activity and Body Mass Index) have all benefited from TPH input and support.

Food Safety Program

The goal of the program is to improve the health of the population by reducing the incidence of food borne illness. The objectives are to ensure that food is stored, prepared, served, and distributed in a manner consistent with acceptable public health practices, and to stop the sale or distribution of food that is unfit for human consumption. The Toronto Food Premises Inspection and Disclosure System has two components. The inspection component ensures a comprehensive, efficient and effective method of conducting compliance inspections consistently across the City of Toronto. The disclosure component provides the general public with easy access to inspection results of all applicable food premises. This enables individuals to make informed decisions about which food premises they choose to visit. There are 79 Public Health Inspectors (PHI) responsible for inspecting over 15,000 food premises in the City of Toronto. TPH also offers Food Handler Certification Courses to provide food handlers with the knowledge of safe food handling practices to prevent food-borne illness. In June 2006, City Council passed a bylaw requiring food handler certification for food handlers in the food and beverage industry.

Dental & Oral Health Services

TPH provides oral health treatment and preventive services to children (0 to 13 years) in low income families, high school students in low income families, perinatal women enrolled in Toronto Public Health programs, and low income, independent living seniors 65 years and older.

Toronto Health Connection

Toronto Public Health provides an Intake service for Toronto residents to call for health information including food and nutrition information, services and referrals

(416-338-7600). Counseling is limited to brief exchanges over the telephone. Currently, there are 2 Registered Dietitians who respond to food and nutrition-related inquiries.

Toronto Heart Health Partnership (THHP)

The Toronto Heart Health Partnership, FoodShare and Toronto Public Health initiated the development of a School Food Garden Start-up program through Heart Health funding. Ten new school food gardens in Toronto were selected as one strategy to help promote heart health. This program will help to remove some of the barriers schools experience in starting a food garden, such as training, tools and resources. Successful school applicants received:

- Professional development training for two staff/volunteers on sustainable garden design and food gardening;
- Support for garden maintenance during the summer months;
- Resources to integrate the garden program into Ontario curriculum expectations;
- Start-up garden tool kit valued at approximately \$500.

As a combined effort by the partners, school garden workshop sessions were organized for Toronto Public Health nurses who are assisting schools with garden implementation; and for school contacts, e.g., teachers, daycare staff, etc., who are involved with the garden program at their schools.

Appendix E

Overview of Toronto School Board Food and Nutrition Initiatives

The information presented below is not intended as a comprehensive list of activities, but an introduction to existing policies and practices and an update to the scan completed by the Food and Hunger Action Committee in its May 2000 report. Some information is presented by age group focus and others by activity type.

TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Foundations for Healthy Families: Community Nutrition from the Ground Up

TDSB has received a grant from the Ministry of Health Promotion to support a community gardening and communal dining program in four elementary schools in neighbourhoods characterized by high rates of poverty and social isolation. The program will begin in the spring of 2008. TDSB will partner with community-based groups such as Green Thumbs/Growing Kids to start and expand food gardens on school grounds. Children, their families and community members can access these gardens to grow their own food and garden activities will be integrated into classroom learning. Food from the garden will also be used to prepare healthy meals for the children, their families and community members to be served weekly in school dining halls. In addition to increasing healthy eating and physical activity opportunities, other important goals of this program are to decrease violence, increase social skills and build self-esteem.

Other food and nutrition initiatives currently being undertaken include:

- A revision of the TDSB Nutrition Policy is going to the Board of Trustees in June for approval.
- Implementation of Phase II of the transfat policy towards to goal of TDSB cafeteria services being trans fat free by September 2008.

TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD (TCDSB)

In 2008, the TCDSB, with the support of TPH, established nutrition standards for Cafeteria Service Request for Proposals. Menus offered by cafeteria service providers for cafeterias and snack vending machines must emphasize at least 80% of foods and beverages from the 'Choose Most Often' category based on the nutrition standard. These foods are part of the four food groups and higher in nutrients and fibre. Cafeteria service providers will be required to be a member of school strategic planning teams comprised of the principal, vice-principal and/or other staff member, student and parent to inform and manage food expectations and pricing and achieve nutrition standards.

In addition, as part of the school strategic planning process, plans are underway to engage students from TCDSB culinary arts/food hospitality programs in cafeteria service delivery. Students will:

- Prepare food items for cafeteria providers
- Assist as food service workers in cafeterias
- Gain co-op opportunities

Appendix F

The State of Toronto's Food: Discussion Paper for a Toronto Food Strategy (Revised May 2008)

Purpose

The purpose of this discussion paper is to provide background for a broader conversation about the development of a Toronto food strategy. Ultimately, the strategy would be an action plan to ensure that Toronto's food system:

- improves health
- promotes economic development
- promotes social justice
- protects the environment, and
- reflects and celebrates community diversity.

The paper cannot address all of the activities, players and processes involved in the food system in great depth. It does, however, provide a comprehensive introduction to a wide range of food system issues. The paper does not recommend specific actions nor does it outline a specific food strategy for Toronto. Developing and implementing such a strategy is a complex task and requires the collective wisdom and action of diverse players. This document is intended to be a starting point for that process.

Why Food is a Big Issue for Toronto

- Toronto's residents and government spend \$7 billion per year on foodⁱ
- One in eight Toronto jobs is directly connected to foodⁱⁱ
- Toronto sits on, and next to, the best agricultural land in Canadaⁱⁱⁱ but Ontario imports \$4.8 billion more in food than it exports^{iv}
- The average Ontario food producer earns a little more than \$7,000 annually from farming operations^v, putting the viability of the greenbelt at risk
- The average food item sold in Toronto has traveled nearly 4,500 km^{vi}
- The food system is responsible for 30% of pollution and greenhouse gas emissions^{vii}
- There are only three days worth of fresh food in the city at any time^{viii}
- Agriculture is by far the biggest consumer of fresh water, accounting for almost two thirds of overall water consumption^{ix}
- Pollution in Lake Ontario has limited the local fish supply. Official advisories warn that large trout and salmon caught on Toronto's shores should never be eaten^x.
- Food prices in Toronto are lower than in most other countries^{xi}, but low wages, low social assistance rates and the high cost of housing still cause many to go hungry^{xii}

- There are more than 744,000 visits to Toronto food banks annually^{xiii} and community food programs serve almost 20,000 meals per day to those in need
- Toronto has at least 144 social and philanthropic food organizations^{xiv}
- Access to culturally appropriate food is limited in some neighbourhoods and food access is not seen as essential in the urban planning process
- Poor nutrition is a key preventable risk factor for chronic diseases but seven out of ten Torontonians consume less than five servings of vegetables and fruit per day, whereas Canada's Food Guide now recommends 7-10 servings
- Toronto's Aboriginal families are two to four times more likely to experience food insecurity than the general population^{xv}
- Poor nutrition has been linked to behaviour problems among children and youth^{xvi}
- More than one in three Toronto children are overweight or obese^{xvii}
- One in 14 Torontonians over 40 has heart disease, one in 15 has diabetes^{xviii}

Introduction

Food plays a key role in not only the health and well-being of Torontonians, but in the city's economic, social, cultural and environmental health. The city is built on and next to some of Canada's best agricultural land, is the second largest food distribution hub in North America and, with its multicultural character, boasts thousands of food outlets representing at least 200 different food cultures. Food is also key to building and maintaining strong neighbourhoods. It can animate communities through numerous exchanges – food growing, selling, buying, cooking and consuming. Food brings people together in celebrations of community and diversity, an important part of the city's culture. Toronto has a wealth of community groups and organizations that have a long history of working to improve the food system into one that embraces health, social and environmental responsibility.

At the City level, Toronto is one of the first municipalities in North America to take a leadership role in food policy. Cities across Canada and the U.S. have used the Toronto Food Charter (see Appendix) as a model for developing their own. Toronto has also recognized the importance of food in addressing climate change. In July 2007, City Council unanimously adopted a call to action on Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy that included a plan to promote local food^{xix}.

Toronto Public Health (TPH) has addressed food issues as a core activity throughout its history. Its current focus includes food and nutrition programs, community development, Nutritious Food Basket surveys, research, food and nutrition-related health promotion campaigns, skills training in schools and child care centres, advocacy initiatives and food safety programs. The Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC), whose members are appointed by the Board of Health, is well respected for its food policy advocacy and innovative partnerships. Toronto is also the only municipality in North America that has a

designated Food and Beverage Sector Specialist in its Economic Development Division to support the growth of the food industry locally.

While most elements of the food system are directed and regulated by provincial and federal governments or the private sector, local government has a large role to play. As a municipality, Toronto has many powers to influence food locally and as the sixth largest government in Canada, it also has considerable influence as an advocate and champion. In particular, the City has the ability to:

- leverage its multimillion dollar annual food purchasing budget in favour of local and sustainable food choices, making the city a supportive neighbour to nearby rural municipalities;
- provide public education and skills development related to healthy eating;
- support the viability and economic development of the local food and beverage industry;
- develop regional links by enabling producers and distributors in and around Toronto to understand and access the opportunities of Toronto's diverse markets;
- use food to connect Torontonians with each other and with people in the surrounding countryside by supporting food events (as it does with the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair and Summerlicious);
- implement policies to reduce food waste by households and commercial and public institutions through reducing food and packaging waste and increasing composting;
- work with school boards to improve the food environment for students, including school gardens, improve food knowledge and skills, provide high quality student nutrition programs, and develop links with local producers and the community; and,
- promote social cohesion, inclusive policies toward immigrants and minorities, and access to nutritious food through community gardens, community kitchens, farmers' and community markets.

In addition, the new City of Toronto Act provides Council with expanded powers. City Council has more authority to provide public services, pass bylaws, levy taxes, and independently enter into agreements with other levels of government.

The body of the discussion paper offers an overview of the current state of Toronto's food including all of the activities from "grow it" to "throw it". To date, there has not been a scan that has looked at Toronto's food system in its entirety. Some stakeholders track specific parts of the food system, often in great detail, but much of the information is not publicly available and pieces are rarely brought together to provide a complete picture of how our food comes to be. Only a very broad assessment of the current state of food will allow TPH and other City and community partners to identify the most effective and appropriate ways to meet current and future food challenges and opportunities.

Toronto's Food Charter

In 2001, Toronto City Council, led by the work of the TFPC and the Food and Hunger Action Committee, adopted the Toronto Food Charter (see Appendix). The Charter is Toronto's official vision of a food secure city and a useful starting point for a discussion of a food strategy. It highlights food as a critical connector among the city's priorities, stating that:

- Every Toronto resident should have access to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and culturally-appropriate food;
- Food is central to Toronto's economy, and the commitment to food security can strengthen the food sector's growth and development; and,
- Food brings people together in celebrations of community and diversity, and is an important part of the city's culture.

By adopting the Charter, Toronto City Council accepted a number of goals related to nutrition, income adequacy, environmental responsibility, urban agriculture, and waste management. While the Charter is an important marker in the development of food policy thinking, the question of how to implement the Charter has not yet been pursued.

Why Focus on Food Now?

There is an emerging recognition of the need for collective action to improve our food. Many big cities around the world are now committing to change the way they feed themselves. In the UK, the London Food Strategy was launched in 2006 to realize the vision of a "world-class sustainable city"^{xx}. The Strategy calls for increasing the choice, availability and quality of food for all Londoners, backed by local government funding of approximately \$8 million (CAD). The Strategy has influenced, and was itself inspired by, similar activities in cities such as Glasgow, Manchester, Amsterdam, Seoul, Hartford, Chicago, Vancouver and Toronto. The section below summarizes several reasons why more and more people in Toronto and elsewhere are focusing on food now.

Food, Nutrition and Disease Prevention

Rising obesity levels and greater evidence linking diet with chronic diseases have raised the profile of healthy eating. In Toronto, this has led to changes in public policy and industry practices such as improving the quality of school food, action to reduce levels of trans fats, communication campaigns to promote healthy eating, and proposed changes to children's food marketing.

At the same time, some have asked whether the food system as a whole is health promoting. A closer look soon reveals a disconnect between public health dietary recommendations and agricultural, processing and marketing practices. Canada's Food Guide recommends 7-10 daily servings of vegetables and fruits but Canada's farms only grow enough to provide each Canadian with 1.27 daily servings of vegetables and 0.42 servings of fruit^{xxi}. Of the 3,936 new children's food products introduced to the market from 1994-2004, only 41 were fruits and 11 were vegetables^{xxii}. Governments and NGOs have also expressed concerns about the quality of foods marketed to consumers, especially children^{xxiii}.

Current food policy, such that it exists, is articulated by fragmented pieces of regulations, policy and programming. It was inherited rather than being born out of an intelligent and deliberate process^{xxiv}. Thousands of food stories have appeared in Canadian media sources over the last year, representing no less than 67 different food-related issues^{xxv}. In the absence of overarching food policy, at the local, provincial or national level, the issues are usually discussed in isolation and solutions are often proposed and implemented without recognizing impacts on other parts of the food system.

Food, Poverty and Social Justice

Substantial inequities exist in several parts of the food system. GTA area farms are kept afloat primarily by producers working second jobs. Ontario farmers earn 82.5% of their income from off-farm activities^{xxvi}. Wages for Toronto food processing workers have been declining in comparison to all other industries and it relies heavily on new immigrants to sustain the workforce^{xxvii}. In spite of an abundance of food in the city, 10.7% of households reported being food insecure in 2004^{xxviii}.

Low wages, low social assistance rates and the high cost of housing make it difficult, if not impossible, for many Toronto residents to put enough safe and nutritious food on the table. Several groups are especially vulnerable. This includes low-income households, lone parent mothers, recent immigrants and racialized minorities, especially urban Aboriginals. There is more research than ever documenting the impact of household food insecurity on children^{xxix}, adults^{xxx} and communities^{xxxi}. Activists have long noted the injustice of hunger in such a wealthy, food abundant city. Its persistence also violates several international charters and conventions that are binding on Canada's Federal Government. This includes the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the U.N. Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (1976) and the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Food and Economic Development

Food is a critical component of the local economy with billions spent each year on food by individuals, agencies and community organizations. With the City's proposed adoption of a local food procurement plan in 2007, it is one of a growing number of big cities to realize the multiplier effect of spending money locally. Food is responsible for the employment of hundreds of thousands of Torontonians in the areas of food production, distribution, processing, retail and food service. An analysis from Michigan State University found that doubling or tripling the amount of fruits and vegetables sold by Michigan farmers to local outlets could generate up to 1,889 new jobs across the state and \$187 million in new personal income^{xxxii}. Ontario currently imports \$4 billion more in food than it exports. Spending more of that money locally could have a huge impact on the economy and job creation.

Current federal agriculture policy in Canada is mainly focused on support for commodity crops, livestock operations, food processing, and food safety standards. As a result, policies are generally set by supranational bodies, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and NAFTA^{xxxiii}. International trade rules prohibit tariff barriers against imported

products but also have provisions allowing governments to support domestic industries. Many U.S. states have initiatives that prioritize local products meaning that there are many more opportunities to support local food in Ontario that could be pursued without contravening existing trade rules^{xxxiv}.

Power in the modern food system rests increasingly in fewer hands. The dominant players are those who connect producers with consumers, such as the agricultural input industry (fertilizer and seeds), processors, distributors and retailers. The food system has been described as an hour glass on its side^{xxxv}. On one end are thousands of producers. On the other are millions of consumers. In the middle is a bottleneck representing a small number of companies that control the flow of goods, and to some extent, information. Canada's food system is dominated by a smaller number of companies than any other food economy in the western world^{xxxvi}. In 2005, four companies controlled 88% of the market share in Canadian beef packing and four others controlled 78% of food retail^{xxxvii}. More recently, food companies have implemented initiatives to promote healthier choices, provide better nutrient labelling, and alter marketing practices. However, given the dominant position held by a small number of players, concerns remain that most decisions influencing the kinds of food that are produced, promoted and available to consumers are made exclusively by the private sector^{xxxviii}.

Food, the Environment and Climate Change

The two largest impacts Torontonians have on the environment each day stems from our choices of food and transportation. The modern food system is dominated by industrialized monoculture¹ farming, fossil fuel inputs (fertilizers and fuel), industrial livestock operations (thousands of animals in one location) and long distribution lines. The rising price of oil is also a factor in rising food prices. Total energy use in the North American food system works out to the energy equivalent of nine barrels of oil per person per year^{xxxix}.

This makes the food system a major contributor to pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity. Conventional agricultural policies over the last century have focussed on growing as much food as possible. The approach originated at a time when hunger and malnutrition were real problems for much of the population. The assumption was that the public good was best served by maximizing food availability. Until recently, this has allowed food production to keep pace with huge increases in global population. However, the increased interest in local and organic food reflects a growing understanding that this abundance has come at a cost. More people are recognizing that the industrialized food system detracts from, rather than contributes to, the health of the land, water and air around us.

Food, Culture and Community Building

Underlying the passion surrounding food issues is an appreciation of the importance of food to our own sense of comfort, stability and community. Our connection with food starts early. Taste is the first sense developed by newborns and their first avenue for

¹ Monoculture is the practice of producing or growing one single crop over a wide area.

exploring the world. Food is what connects mother and child. People in every culture come together around food, and food brings people together. In recent years, the growth of the Slow Food movement, an increase in TV food programs, cook books, and food events/festivals reflect a desire to rediscover the pleasure and conviviality of cooking and sharing good food.

Food plays a critical role in developing and maintaining the social infrastructure required to maximize urban quality of life. In many ways it is the means by which people and organizations come together to exchange ideas, solve problems and form partnerships^{x1}. For example, community gardens in local parks can cultivate liveable communities by providing recreation, inexpensive healthy food (which frees up money to be spent elsewhere in the city), and making parks a safer place to be. School food programs can enhance the capacity of schools to act as catalysts for neighbourhood cohesion. Many community organizations in Toronto already provide multiple food-related services such as community gardens, community kitchens, skills training and direct food assistance. As much as providing nutritional support to those in need, the organizations help many residents get on their feet socially and establish new networks. These examples show that any city looking for ways to bring people together to improve quality of life should integrate food into their city planning.

Overview of Toronto's Food

The remainder of the discussion paper provides information on Toronto's food arranged according to the following six stages:

1. Production
2. Processing and manufacturing
3. Transportation and distribution
4. Retail, marketing and purchasing
5. Preparation and consumption
6. Waste Management

Each section begins with a summary and is followed by selected statistics to provide further context. Given the multiple influences on the food supply, the paper also includes provincial and national perspectives where relevant or when necessary in the absence of local data. The information below is not intended as the final word on Toronto's food but as an introduction to how the city is fed and interacts with provincial, national and global food systems. A number of questions are included at the end of this section to guide feedback and inform next steps.

1. Production

Summary

Only a small percentage of the food that Torontonians eat is produced within city limits. Production is limited to the city's 76 farms and thousands of community gardens, municipal allotments and private backyard gardens. Green space makes up 18% of

Toronto's land area, although not all of this could be used for farming. It includes ravines, valleys, woodlots, waterfront natural areas, parks and existing farmland^{xli}. Green roofs are also a potential production resource, with 5,000 hectares of rooftop space available across the city^{xlii}.

The Toronto area contains some of the best agricultural land in the country. On a clear day, over one third of Canada's class one² farmland can be seen from the top of the CN Tower^{xliii}. Just outside the city's boundaries, in the Toronto CMA³, there are 2,839 farms, although many of these are not food-producing operations. Compared to the rest of the province, the Toronto CMA has a higher percentage of fruit and vegetable growers and greenhouses. Field crops⁴ make up a much smaller proportion of farms, but are still the most common type^{xliv}. No information is available on the amount of food produced by Toronto area farms.

At the national level, the food system generates enough calories for every person in Canada, a total of 2,440 per day^{xlv}. However, two thirds of Canada's food production is devoted to field crops and beef. Since 2001, fruit and vegetable farming has increased and now represents 5.5% of all farms^{xlvi}. Large operations account for most production, while smaller and medium sized farms have been declining for decades. Overall farm incomes are similar to other sectors, yet in 2004, the average Ontario producer earned \$7,368 from farm operations^{xlvii}. Some government payments exist, but farm family income is subsidized by off-farm employment more than anything else.

Most Ontario agriculture is not geared to growing food for a local market. Much of the agricultural land is used for non-food operations such as sod farms, horse farms, Christmas tree farms, flowers, tobacco, and crops grown for non-food purposes (corn for ethanol). Of the food that is grown, a sizable proportion is targeted for export or processing, not for sale directly to Ontario consumers^{xlviii}.

Statistics

Land Use - Toronto:

- Toronto has over 1,000 community garden plots in parks, public lands and social housing areas. There are 20 municipal allotment gardens containing 2,500 plots. Individual garden plots total over 4,500^{xlix}.
- A great deal of potentially fertile soil is paved over to accommodate vehicle parking. For example, retail parking on Eglinton Avenue East between Victoria Park and Warden (a 1.25 km stretch of road) totals 65.1 acres¹.

² According to the classification system used in the Canada Land Inventory, class one farmland contains the best soil, has no significant limitations for agriculture and has the highest productivity for a wide range of crops.

³ The Toronto CMA (Census Metropolitan Area) borders Ajax, Pickering and Uxbridge to the east, Georgina, New Tecumseth and Mono to the north and Caledon, Milton and Oakville to the west.

⁴ Field crops are crops other than fruits or vegetables that are grown for agricultural purposes, e.g. wheat, canola or cotton.

Land Use – Nationally:

- Overall, 7.3% of Canada’s land area was farmed in 2006^{li}.
- Only a small proportion (0.5%) of Canada is Class 1 agricultural land^{lii}.
- Farm numbers have been declining steadily in Canada since 1941^{liii}.

Production:

- One-third of farms in Canada have sales over \$100,000 and these farms account for nearly 90% of all farm production^{liv}.
- Approximately 0.01 acres (or 436 square feet) per person of farmland in Canada is devoted to fruit and vegetable cultivation. The figure is the same for Ontario^{lv}.

Economics and Demographics of Farming:

- The Canadian agriculture and agri-food system^{lvi} accounted for 8.3% of Canada’s total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2003^{lvii}.
- Off-farm income accounted for 78.8% of total income in 2004. This was the highest proportion during any point in the last decade. In 2004, Ontario farmers earned 82.5% of their annual income from off-farm activities^{lviii}.
- The number of farms in Ontario declined 11.5% from 1996 to 2001. Farm population declined by 15.9% in the same five-year period^{lix}.
- The average age of farmers in Canada in 2006 was 52 (in Ontario 52.6), up from 47.5 in 1991. Only 9.1% of farmers are under 35 years of age^{lx}.

Fisheries:

- Although the health benefits of fish consumption are well documented, consumption advisories for fish caught in Lake Ontario have become more severe compared to all other Great Lakes^{lxi}. Official advisories warn against ever eating large trout, salmon, bass or smelt caught on Toronto’s shores^{lxii}.

Agriculture and the Environment:

- Globally, humans get about 50% of their food from three crops (corn, wheat and rice) and 95% from less than 30^{lxiii}.
- The food system is responsible for 30% of pollution and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions^{lxiv}.
- Primary agriculture contributes approximately 10% of Canada's GHG emissions^{lxv}.
- Questions have been raised about children’s exposure to chemical pesticide residues through food^{lxvi} and how government maximum residue levels are set^{lxvii}.
- Critics have argued that intensive livestock operations pose a risk to the environment, public health and rural communities^{lxviii}.
- Significant concerns have been raised about the potential environmental and public health impact of genetically modified foods^{lxix}.

2. Processing and Manufacturing

Summary

The food processing and manufacturing sector in Toronto plays a large role in the city's economy. Annual sales totalled \$17.8 billion in 2004. The city has over 500 food processing companies and employs more than 50,000 workers or 12% of the industrial workforce^{lxx}. Across the province, the food and beverage processing industry is the second largest manufacturing sector after the auto industry^{lxxi}.

Wages for Toronto food processing workers have been declining in comparison to all other industries. From 1997 to 2001, the gap between the average pay for food processors compared to all industries increased from 3% to 14%. There are also twice as many new immigrants working in the Toronto food industry compared to all other industries. Immigration has been the single most important factor over the past 50 years in staffing the industry. It is expected that new immigrants will assume an even greater level of importance in the food industry in the future^{lxxii}.

Statistics

- At \$70.1 billion in annual shipments for 2001, Canadian food and beverage manufacturing accounted for approximately 13% of all Canadian manufacturing activity^{lxxiii}.
- In the Toronto CMA, there are over 2,000 food and beverage manufacturing establishments.
- The food manufacturing industry has been a traditional employer of second income earners (generally females), new immigrants and lesser skilled persons^{lxxiv}.

3. Transportation and Distribution

Summary

Toronto is a pivotal food transportation and distribution centre. The city is the second largest food hub in North America and among the largest for trucking, rail and air shipments for all industries. Toronto has access to a large regional market of over 6 million people, which is matched in size and concentration by only three other urban centres on the continent. The city is also the most cost effective location for road freight of all major metropolitan markets in North America^{lxxv}. Due to the “just in time” delivery methods used by major retailers, it is estimated that there are only three days worth of fresh food available in Toronto at any time. If an emergency disrupts the distribution network for an extended period, access to food would be a problem. Toronto Fire Services has developed food tips for residents to cope with short-term emergencies.

The Ontario Food Terminal is a key component of the city's food distribution system. The terminal is Canada's largest wholesale market for fresh produce and the third largest in North America. Nearly 6,000 buyers use it, representing small greengrocers in the GTA, independent supermarkets, institutions, restaurants and the food service industry^{lxxvi}. Toronto is one of a small number of North American cities to have retained

a public food distribution centre. Among its benefits, the terminal acts as a pricing market for produce. Without it, prices for fresh fruits and vegetables would be set by the major food retailers. The terminal also allows smaller neighbourhood retailers to acquire fresh produce, vastly increasing the availability of vegetables and fruit in neighbourhoods across the city. The multiplier effect of having a major distribution centre in the city makes it possible for hundreds of food processors, packagers and freight forwarders in the city to employ over 40,000 people^{lxxxvii}.

Food miles, the distance food travels from production to consumption, have increased dramatically over the last generation. Waterloo Region Public Health found that of 58 commonly eaten foods, all of which could be grown or raised locally, the average food traveled 4,497 km to reach stores in their region^{lxxxviii}. The pollution associated with such long distance distribution amounted to 51,709 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually. Assuming these findings could be extrapolated to food consumed in Toronto, replacing all of the same imported foods with locally grown GTA products would have the same impact on GHG emissions as taking approximately 205,000 cars off GTA roads^{lxxxix}. This is more cars than use the Don Valley Parkway in 24 hours^{lxxx}.

Statistics

- Ontario imports \$4 billion more in agricultural commodities than it exports. At the national level, Canadian producers export slightly more food than is imported^{lxxxxi}.
- The most common imports nationally are fruits and vegetables (27.5%), beverages (11.9%) and grains and oilseeds products (11.2%).
- Imports from countries other than the U.S. and Mexico have more than doubled since 1990. Sixty percent of Canada's imports come from the U.S.^{lxxxii}

4. Retail, Marketing and Purchasing

Summary

Tens of thousands of Torontonians make a living selling food. The city has over 4,000 food retail outlets and over 6,000 restaurants representing 200 different food cultures^{lxxxiii}. Major retail food outlets are still the most common source for most Toronto food shoppers. The city also has 20 farmers' markets and numerous food box programs and food co-ops. Most neighbourhoods have access to good quality food retail outlets but a few lower income areas, such as Regent Park, are not well served. A survey of low income Toronto families with children in 12 high poverty neighbourhoods found the average distance to a discount grocery store was 1.3km^{lxxxiv}. No link was found between distance to stores and household food insecurity but it would be a significant barrier for those with a disability and single parents with young children and no car.

Food retailers have moved in recent decades to become the most powerful players in the food system. Toronto, as elsewhere, has seen the emergence of super sized food retail outlets. The average number of products carried by a typical supermarket has more than tripled since 1980, from 15,000 to 50,000^{lxxxv}. Food retail is also dominated by a small number of big players. As of 2005, four companies controlled 78% of the market share in

Canadian food retail^{lxxxvi}. The world's largest food retailer, Wal-Mart, has also recently expanded into Toronto.

Figures are not available for spending on food marketing in Canada, but in the U.S., companies spent \$10.4 billion in 2006^{lxxxvii}. Food marketing to children has increased dramatically over the last generation^{lxxxviii}. U.S. research shows that 97.8% of TV food ads viewed by children 2-11 years old are high in fat, sugar or sodium^{lxxxix}. Governments and NGOs have expressed concerns about the appropriateness of this marketing^{xc}.

In 2003, Torontonians spent approximately \$6.6 billion on food^{xc}. The price of the most basic food items has increased 7% since 2006 and 24.5% since 1999^{xcii}. Food prices are slightly lower than in Vancouver, but much higher compared to Montreal^{xciii}. Toronto-based government agencies, community groups, non-profit organizations and charities spend about \$100 million on food each year^{xciv}.

In spite of recent increases, food actually takes up a much smaller proportion of the average household budget than it did 40 years ago. On average, 10% of Canadians' overall household expenditures go to food, making the country's food supply among the least expensive in the world^{xcv}. In spite of our cheap food, low wages, low social assistance rates and the high cost of housing result in many Torontonians being unable to put food on the table. However, in the absence of consistent national or regional measurement the size of the problem is not specifically known. One survey from 2004 found that 10.7% of Toronto households were food insecure. Foreign-born residents were more likely to be food insecure compared to those born in Canada (13.4% compared to 8%)^{xcvi}. There were 744,232 visits to Toronto food banks in 2006^{xcvii}.

Statistics

- The food service and hospitality sector in Canada employs more than 1.7 million people but it is getting harder to find and keep employees. The sector will need another 300,000 employees by 2015^{xcviii}.
- Annual grocery retail sales across Canada totals \$57 billion^{xcix}.
- The Ontario government recently amended regulations to allow street vendors to sell a broader range of foods^c.

5. Preparation and Consumption

Summary

Although no information was found on the food skills of Torontonians today compared to previous generations, there is a perception that fewer people know how to cook from scratch. This stems, perhaps, from the loss of home economics courses in many schools and the trend towards "ready to eat" supermarket meals and fast food outlets. At the same time there has been an increased interest in food preparation, reflected by the recent surge in popularity of cookbooks and cooking programs on television. Home cooking can bring nutritional and social benefits but public health authorities also promote safe food

handling. Food preparation in the home is the leading cause of the 11-13 million cases of foodborne illness in Canada every year^{ci}.

The average Canadian adult now tends increasingly to eat alone and spend less time on meals. Time spent eating alone when not at work has increased. When asked about a specific day's activities, 42% of workers in 2005 had eaten at least one meal alone, compared to 28% in 1986. This was the third most important factor accounting for the decline in average time spent with family between 1986 and 2005^{cii}. Some research shows an association between the frequency of family meals and healthier dietary habits of children and youth^{ciii}.

The typical Canadian adult consumes 1,900-2,600 calories per day. About half of daily calories come from grains, meat and alternatives. Children's diets differ from adults' by having less meat, vegetables and fruit but more milk products and grains^{civ}. More than half (56.7%) of Toronto children age 4-8 consume less than 5 servings of vegetables and fruit per day. Among adults in Toronto the proportion is even higher (69.1%)^{cv}. Canada's Food Guide now recommends a daily minimum of seven servings for adults.

Poor diet has been implicated in the rising prevalence of overweight and obesity. In 2004, 34.0% of Toronto children age 2-11 were overweight or obese, slightly lower than the national average. One in three Toronto adults was also overweight^{cvi}. The estimated economic cost of obesity among all ages in 2001 was \$4.3 billion nationally (\$1.6 billion of direct costs and \$2.7 billion of indirect costs, such as the value of economic output lost because of illness, injury-related work disability and premature death)^{cvii}.

Breast milk provides infants with essential nutrients and calories, and contains non-nutritive components that act as protective factors against allergies and common illnesses^{cviii}. TPH promotes the World Health Organization recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, but research shows that only 18% of Toronto infants are breastfed this way^{cix}.

Food also affects brain function and development. There is increasing evidence that a healthy and varied diet can improve the symptoms of some mental illnesses and the effectiveness of medication for some conditions^{cx}. Mental health issues have surpassed cardiovascular disease as the fastest growing category of disability costs in Canada^{cx}.

Statistics

- The average Canadian spends 42 minutes/day preparing meals (54 minutes/day by women, 24 minutes/day by men)^{cxii}.
- Adults in the lowest income households are more likely than those in the highest to have fewer than five daily servings of vegetables and fruit: 58% versus 41%.
- Adults in the highest income households are significantly more likely than those in any other income group to report having eaten something from a fast food outlet^{cxiii}.

- Among Toronto food bank users, 18% have children under six years of age. Of this group, 81% reported that there are foods that they think they should eat for a healthy diet but cannot afford. The food groups most commonly cited were meat and alternatives (81%), vegetables and fruit (78%) and milk products (59%)^{cxiv}.
- Among a sample of respondents from 484 low-income renter families with children residing in high-poverty Toronto neighbourhoods, almost two-thirds reported moderate or severe experiences of food insecurity. Experiences ranged from reducing the quality or variety of food to disrupted eating patterns and not having enough to eat. A majority of the families in the sample were headed by a lone mother (53%) and 82% of respondents were members of a visible minority^{cxv}.

6. Waste Management

Summary

A significant amount of waste is associated with the food system, both in food losses and in the waste generated through packaging. No Canadian analyses are available, but U.S. research suggests that 40-50% of all food ready for harvest is never eaten^{cxvi}. Poor weather and pest infestations are responsible for some losses as are minimum quality standards for fresh produce set by governments and retailers. With these requirements in mind, fruit and vegetable producers often harvest selectively, leaving small, misshapen, or otherwise blemished produce in the field^{cxvii}.

Toronto has diverted a substantial amount of waste from landfills through its Blue Box and Green Bin programs. Approximately 510,000 single-family households in Toronto can now use the Green Bin program and pilot programs are underway in apartment buildings. At present, the program produces approximately 5,000 tonnes of compost each year^{cxviii}.

Statistics

- Based on U.S. research, the average household wastes 14% of its food purchases. This includes 15% that are products still within their expiration date but never opened. The research estimated that an average family of four throws out \$590 worth of food per year in meat, fruits, vegetables and grain products^{cxix}.
- Older research by the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that:
 - 5.4 billion pounds of food were lost at the retail level (2% of edible food supplies)
 - 91 billion pounds of food were lost by consumers and foodservice (26% of edible food supplies)
 - Fresh fruits and vegetables accounted for 19.6% of consumer and foodservice losses, followed by fluid milk (18.1%)^{cxx}

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE FEEDBACK

A Toronto Food Strategy would be an action plan to ensure that Toronto's food system improves health, promotes economic development and social justice, protects the environment, and reflects and celebrates community diversity. Based on the information presented in this paper and your own expertise, please provide us with feedback to the questions below.

1. Does the State of Toronto's Food discussion paper accurately represent current issues and trends? If not, what's missing?
2. In the next couple of years, where do you see the greatest opportunity to make progress on the issues outlined in the paper?
3. What would you like to see a Toronto Food Strategy accomplish?
4. What organization(s) or individual(s) is(are) best positioned to provide leadership in the development of a Toronto Food Strategy?
5. How should key stakeholders be involved? What kind of process would be most effective? What supports are required to make this happen (please be realistic!)?
6. Would you participate in developing a Toronto Food Strategy? How could such a strategy assist your work? What could you contribute?

Toronto Food Charter (2001)

In 1976, Canada signed the United Nations Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, which includes “the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.” The City of Toronto supports our national commitment to food security, and the following beliefs:

Every Toronto resident should have access to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and culturally-appropriate food.

Food security contributes to the health and well-being of residents while reducing their need for medical care.

Food is central to Toronto’s economy, and the commitment to food security can strengthen the food sector’s growth and development.

Food brings people together in celebrations of community and diversity and is an important part of the city’s culture.

Therefore, to promote food security, Toronto City Council will:

- Champion the right of all residents to adequate amounts of safe, nutritious, culturally-acceptable food without the need to resort to emergency food providers
- Advocate for income, employment, housing, and transportation policies that support secure and dignified access to the food people need
- Support events highlighting the city’s diverse and multicultural food traditions
- Promote food safety programs and services
- Sponsor nutrition programs and services that promote healthy growth and help prevent diet-related diseases
- Ensure convenient access to an affordable range of healthy foods in city facilities
- Adopt food purchasing practices that serve as a model of health, social and environmental responsibility
- Partner with community, cooperative, business and government organizations to increase the availability of healthy foods
- Encourage community gardens that increase food self-reliance, improve fitness, contribute to a cleaner environment, and enhance community development

- Protect local agricultural lands and support urban agriculture
- Encourage the recycling of organic materials that nurture soil fertility
- Foster a civic culture that inspires all Toronto residents and all city departments to support food programs that provide cultural, social, economic and health benefits
- Work with community agencies, residents' groups, businesses and other levels of government to achieve these goals.

The Food Charter also sets out “Ten Reasons Why Toronto Supports Food Security”. The full Charter is available from http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/food_hunger/pdf/food_charter.pdf.

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