Toronto Food Strategy

Food Connections:
Toward a Healthy and Sustainable Food System for Toronto
A Consultation Report
February 2019

Why A Food Strategy?

- Excitement about food is growing

Why A Food Strategy?

- Food-related problems on the rise
Why A Food Strategy?

- Using broad food system approaches can solve problems and harvest benefits

Food System = "Grow it to Throw it"

Big Cities Taking Action on Food

- New York
- London
- San Francisco
Toronto Poised to Lead the Way

- Natural resources
- Economic strength

- Engaged residents
- Effective community agencies

Examples of Local Government’s Food Levers

- Support growth of food processors
- Collect food waste
Examples of Local Government's Food Levers

- Food safety inspections
- Planning neighbourhoods
- Business licences
  
  Cooking Up Some Fun!
  For greater and greater Baby apples
  
  - Food skills education
  - Healthy eating promotion
  - Breastfeeding support

Examples of Local Government's Food Levers

- Fund school meal programs
- Serve food in childcare centres, seniors' homes & shelters
  
  - Coordinate food festivals and events

Food Strategy Steering Group

- Project endorsed by BOH in June 2008
- 21 member Steering Group convened – community food experts and some senior City staff – to guide development of Strategy
- Group met throughout 2009
- Staff drafted “Food Connections” consultation report with advice from Steering Group, Toronto Food Policy Council and many others
Food Connections Consultation Report

- Toronto is first big city to take a broad health-focused food system approach
- Report identifies six directions to a health-focused food system with examples of "ideas for action"
- Report goes out for community consultation

A Health Focused Food System...

- Supports food safety, nutrition & disease prevention
- Fosters food-friendly neighbourhoods
- Empowers people with food skills & information
- Creates green jobs
- Protects the environment
- Builds strong communities
- Promotes social justice

Six Directions to a Health Focused Food System

1. Grow food-friendly neighbourhoods
   - Include food activities in community and recreation centres, libraries and community hubs
   - Ensure Transit City project recognizes that busy streets require lively mix of food stores, restaurants, cafes, etc.
   - Encourage community gardens, bake ovens, farmers' markets and fresh food markets
Six Directions to a Health Focused Food System

2. Make food a centerpiece of new green economy
   - Expand City's Food Business Incubator project
   - Urge Ontario Food Terminal to make it easier to source local and local-sustainable foods
   - Expand food festivals and celebrations to all parts of city, including a "Hiddenicious" event that highlights little known businesses

Six Directions to a Health Focused Food System

3. Eliminate hunger in Toronto
   - Use planning to put quality affordable food stores in every neighbourhood
   - Advocate social assistance and minimum wage rates based on cost of healthy eating
   - Support food bank efforts to provide nutritious and culturally appropriate food

Six Directions to a Health Focused Food System

4. Empower residents with food skills & information
   - Promote transparency in the food system – better labelling of calories, trans fats, etc.
   - Weave food skills & info broadly into school curriculum
   - Promote food literacy in newcomer settlement and homeless services
Six Directions to a Health Focused Food System

5. Connect city and countryside through food

- Expand urban farms, farm-to-school programs, and farmers' markets
- Expand City government purchasing of local food; explore funding for sustainable food purchases

Six Directions to a Health Focused Food System

6. Embed food system thinking in City government

- Use food to achieve environmental, economic and social objectives of city
- Coordinate and evaluate food initiatives
- Promote new partnerships within City, among governments and with community

Community Engagement

➢ Will consult and engage broad range of people and organizations over next few months
➢ Feedback from engagement will be incorporated into revised Food Strategy report and submitted to City Council by summer 2010
➢ Council report will contain more detailed action steps