

Attachment 2

Overview of the Accomplishments of the Toronto Food Policy Council

20 Years of Food Systems Leadership

In 2011 the Toronto Food Policy Council celebrates 20 years of food systems thinking and municipal food policy leadership. During that time we have seen a proliferation of local sustainable food programs, enterprises and policies globally and at all three government levels in Canada.

Food Policy Council activities bridge economic development, sustainability and public health issues. The Toronto Food Policy Council's contribution to municipal food policy is featured in several recent publications, including "Food Policy Councils: Innovations in Democratic Governance for a Sustainable and Equitable Food System" prepared by the UCLA Urban Planning Department for the Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force.¹ The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in U.S. identifies food policy councils as a key indicator for increased consumption of fruit and vegetables.

"A systems approach to food considers many factors involved in getting fruits and vegetables from farms to consumers, including the roles of growers, processors and retailers. Food policy councils are organizations made up of many agencies and community organizations that look at access of fresh produce at the community and state levels. These councils make recommendations about policies and programs such as farm-to-school programs, community gardens, farmers markets and availability of fresh produce in supermarkets."²

The food systems perspective espoused by food policy councils is seen as driving new approaches to health promotion, economic development and agriculture policy renewal.

Toronto Food Strategy

Toronto Public Health staff supports the Toronto Food Policy Council, and the TFPC co-ordinator played an important role in the development of the Toronto Food Strategy. The Food Strategy appears on the agenda of all TFPC meetings to facilitate in depth reports from the Food Strategy team and knowledge-sharing between the team and TFPC members. This provides expanded capacity for the implementation of the Food Strategy, and ensures stronger linkages between Toronto Public Health and community food initiatives. It also enables stronger linkages between the TFPC and City of Toronto government.

Toronto Youth Food Policy Council

The Toronto Food Policy Council has provided staff support to the Toronto Youth Food Policy Council, the world's first youth food policy council. The TYFPC seeks to mobilize and engage youth to make change by building a just food system. The ten member Council provides youth with a space to network, share opportunities, learn from one another, and connect to community food initiatives. The TYFPC strives to become Toronto's leading youth voice in sustainable municipal food policy change. At their well attended monthly meetings the youth produce a food

¹ Fox, Clare. June 2010. "Food Policy Councils: Innovations in Democratic Governance for a Sustainable and Equitable Food System." Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force.

² Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. September 2010. "Food Policy Councils Make Healthier Places." Accessed on April 2, 2011 from <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/Fruits&Veggies/>

policy position paper. These papers are submitted to the TFPC to provide a summary of the youths' priorities. Position papers on the topics of food literacy, hunger, poverty and food deserts, and urban agriculture have been developed over the past year and have been presented to the TFPC and to the Food Strategy team.

The TYFPC hosts two annual events. "So You(th) Think You Can Cook" is held in the Journey to Your Good Health pavilion at the Royal Winter Fair in November. This year youth between the ages of 15 to 25 were challenged to cook a healthy dish in 20 minutes using three Ontario ingredients with a budget of 15 dollars. The Youth Food Fair held in April (2010 and 2011) connects youth seeking careers in the sustainable local food movement with community organizations and businesses. These successful events attract hundreds of participants and have received media attention.

Multiplying Food Strategies and Networks

Toronto's Food Strategy was the first municipal health focused food strategy that identifies municipal levers and promotes building food connections. Drawing on the experience of 20 years of municipal food policy development, the Toronto Food Policy Council is contributing to a number of regional, provincial and federal level food strategies, policy development processes, and policy networks.

For example, the TFPC advises other communities and organizations interested in integrating food systems thinking into their work. Over the past year the TFPC advised many communities developing food charters or food policy councils including Durham, Halton, City of Kawartha Lakes, Hamilton, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, and Vancouver.

Regionally, led by the Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee, a farming and food strategy is being developed for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Colleagues from Public Health Units across eight regions are participating. The TFPC is actively involved in advising and contributing to this strategy. The background document produced for the strategy reveals the tremendous economic and health impact of the farming and food sector for the region. An action plan is being developed to enhance partnerships across municipalities, organizations, and the food industry. This will be presented to the Board of Health when it is released.

Provincially, Sustain Ontario – The Alliance for Healthy Food and Farming is leading a number of initiatives linking food, agriculture, health, environment, and the economy. Sustain Ontario engages food and farm leaders from across the province to identify strategic opportunities in the sustainable local food sector, and promotes an integrated food policy vision. At the federal food policy level, the TFPC is working with the People's Food Policy Project and the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute to develop policy proposals that integrate agriculture, food and health. The People's Food Policy released on April 18, 2011 (www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca) is the result of a pan-Canadian consultation process that engaged more than 3500 Canadians to share their food policy proposals. The TFPC staff support person sits on the Sustain Ontario Advisory Council, and is a member of the People's Food Policy Project Management Team.

Forums for Dialogue

The Toronto Food Policy Council meetings continue to be a dynamic venue for community education, information sharing, and networking. Presentations by food systems experts draw many guests to the public meetings at City Hall. Topics over the past year have included: the

global food crisis, learning gardens, food literacy and school food, urban agriculture, and neighbourhood food action, among others. TFPC meetings are a vehicle for promoting food policy and action across Toronto and showcasing innovative food initiatives.

The TFPC collaborates with the Equity Studies program at New College and Hart House at the University of Toronto, Meal Exchange, and the Centre for Community Partnerships, on the Global Food Equity project. Activities include a series of tastings, workshops, panel discussions and lectures addressing the issues related to food and how we can all take action in a local and effective way. This year a series of events were held during World Food Week in October, as well as a screening of Helena Norberg-Hodge's film *The Economics of Happiness* in January.

The Food for Talk event series provides a place for discussion between people who work with communities, government and universities. Regular forums explore the emerging and challenging issues around food security, agricultural transformation, and local food alternatives/networks. This series is jointly sponsored by the University of Toronto, Department of Geography, York University Faculty of Environmental Studies, the Ryerson Centre for Studies in Food Security, and the Toronto Food Policy Council. This year four Food for Talk events took place.