



### Toronto Food Strategy: 2018 Update Report

**Date:** June 28, 2018  
**To:** Board of Health  
**From:** Medical Officer of Health  
**Wards:** All

#### **SUMMARY**

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The Toronto Food Strategy, led by Toronto Public Health, was established in 2010. It aligns with the growing international, national and regional food movements and the increasing recognition of the important role of cities in promoting healthy sustainable food systems. The attached document, Toronto Food Strategy 2018 Report (Attachment 1), describes the opportunities and complexities of working towards healthy food systems change, and how the Toronto Food Strategy uses a multi-sectoral approach to build capacity internally at the city level and to facilitate collaboration with external partners to accomplish change.

This report outlines the Toronto Food Strategy's progress and alignment with the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact; collaboration with City divisions and external stakeholders, and how the Toronto Food Strategy can inform new and existing City policies and strategies, including the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The Board of Health receive this report for information.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There is no financial impact associated with this report.

## DECISION HISTORY

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At its meeting of October 30, 2017, the Board of Health requested the Medical Officer of Health to report back to the Board of Health by the second quarter of 2018 on the Toronto Food Strategy Phase 2

[HL22.5 Toronto Food Strategy: 2017 Update Report.](#)

## COMMENTS

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This report outlines the Toronto Food Strategy's progress in the following areas:

- Alignment with the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact including a new measurement framework;
- Collaboration with various City divisions and external stakeholders including community academic partners;
- Informing new and existing City policies; and
- Supporting TO Prosperity (Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy), Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy 2020, TransformTO, Economic Development and the Toronto Resiliency Strategy.

### **The Toronto Food Strategy is aligned with the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact**

The Toronto Food Strategy (Toronto Food Strategy), led by Toronto Public Health (TPH), continues to champion innovations to advance healthier and sustainable food systems and enable Toronto to meet its obligations under the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. To this end, the Toronto Food Strategy has adapted the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) indicator framework to create a preliminary city-specific, fit-for-purpose set of metrics that measure Toronto's progress towards achieving a healthy and sustainable food system. It focuses on available indicators/metrics but also serves to highlight the gaps and areas of opportunity for the City of Toronto's Food Strategy.

The following pillars adapted from the MUFPP are the current Toronto Food Strategy Action Work Streams:

- 1) Governance (Ensuring and enabling environment for effective action);
- 2) Health (Sustainable Diets and Nutrition);
- 3) Social and Economic Equity;
- 4) Food Production, Supply and Distribution; and
- 5) Food System Waste

The Toronto Food Strategy has developed an Indicator Framework (Attachment 2) to measure and describe the City of Toronto's progress in achieving a healthy, sustainable food system. The framework lists the food strategy work streams adapted from the MUFPP and the corresponding recommended actions. It also identifies the City of Toronto food related Initiatives, the responsible City division/directorate, partner

organization or institution, indicators that pertain to Toronto, and available baseline data.

There are a total of 39 indicators in the framework. At the time of this report, 21 indicators had available baseline data, six indicators had pending data for 2018, and 12 indicators had no data available. There were notable data gaps in the Food Production, Supply and Distribution workstream. This initial collection of baseline data will serve as a basis for comparison for data that will be collected and reported out at a 12 month follow-up.

### **The City is collaborating across city divisions and with city partners**

The City of Toronto is collaborating across city divisions, and with a number of community organizations and academic institutions on advancing food systems change. Food is integrated across City divisions through various initiatives as depicted in Attachment 3 and shows the Toronto Food Strategy's connection to the many food initiatives currently underway at the City.

The Toronto Food Strategy will continue to strengthen inter-divisional collaboration to catalyze food systems change. In the past, many city divisions have not perceived themselves as having a role in food and food systems change. However, food has increasingly become an important gateway to meet divisional and city goals. Furthermore, food projects provide a vehicle for cross divisional collaboration as food intersects various departments, missions and goals.

### **There are opportunities to integrate with City policies and programs and support key City strategies**

There are a number of opportunities to inform and integrate with new and existing City policies and programs, as well as using the City's purchasing power to further this sustainable food system agenda. A collaboration that has the potential to enhance Toronto Food Strategy's policy direction is the University of Toronto's Food Environment Policy Index (EPI) project.

The project aims to identify key food policy priorities for the City using a policy analysis tool that measures the progress municipal governments have made toward improving food environments and implementing obesity prevention policies and actions. The Food EPI process is being used in various cities, across the province and nation-wide. Toronto Public Health will continue to work with the University to develop a comprehensive list of proposed food policy actions. This will ensure Toronto remains on the cutting-edge of food systems change while aligning its efforts with the provincial and federal food policy movements.

In addition, the Toronto Food Strategy is in ongoing discussions regarding the integration of FoodReach, an online portal that offers community organizations a platform to order fresh and healthy foods at wholesale prices with free next day delivery, into the City's Social Procurement Policy.

The Toronto Food Strategy also supports key City strategies including TO Prosperity (Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy), Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy 2020, TransformTO, Economic Development and ResilientTO. Promoting sustainability requires cities to consider the resiliency of their city-regional food systems. The City of Toronto has engaged in a process to assess the vulnerability of its food system in the event of a weather-related emergency. Toronto Public Health partnered with Environment and Energy Division (EED) and commissioned a study to identify the most significant risks climate change would pose to food distribution and access within Toronto and to make recommendations for further action. The Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC) and Meister Consultants Group (MCG) led the study. They examined the food supply chain within Toronto and surrounding areas and the potential public health impacts at the neighbourhood level, specifically considering the impact on vulnerable populations.

The report highlights that food access is a major risk because it could be significantly limited, especially in certain neighbourhoods, due to failures in electrical power, fuel distribution, telecommunication networks and transportation infrastructure. Toronto Public Health is leading the work to bring together various city divisions to work on the recommendations from this report. This is a unique example of how interdivisional collaboration is facilitated through a focus on food resiliency. The vulnerability assessment also integrates mandates from four major city initiatives including: TO Prosperity, Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy 2020, Transform TO and the Toronto Resiliency Strategy.

Both the Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy 2020 and TO Prosperity emphasize the need to improve access to healthy affordable food for all Toronto residents. The Toronto Food Strategy incubates and prototypes initiatives, such as the social supermarket model, to help support the goals of these City strategies. Social supermarkets have been successfully implemented throughout Europe as a way to address food insecurity by providing high quality, low cost food in a dignified shopping environment. This is achieved by working with food producers, manufacturers and distributors to redirect surplus food to customers and also reduce food waste. At the same time, social supermarkets leverage access to food to connect people to social supports and services, and, through a kitchen and café, provide nutritious meals while breaking social isolation and bringing community together. The Toronto Food Strategy is working with partners at Rexdale Community Hub to demonstrate the social supermarket concept through a prototype adapted to the needs of the local community.

### **Future Directions and Next Steps**

The Toronto Food Strategy will continue to evolve to meet the City's food needs. The following focus areas have emerged as priorities in the coming year:

- Food Systems Waste and the Circular Economy;
- Food Resilience;
- Sustainable Diets and Nutrition and Ecological Public Health; and
- Measuring progress through the Indicator Framework

The Toronto Food Strategy will leverage partnerships, collaboration and resources to address these focus areas and continue to move the needle on food systems change.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Dr. Eileen de Villa  
Medical Officer of Health

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1: Toronto Food Strategy 2018  
Attachment 2: Toronto Food Strategy Indicator Framework  
Attachment 3: City of Toronto Initiatives Diagram