



Goal: Feeding Ourselves Well

Vancouver has a healthy, just, and sustainable food system.

Healthy City for All Target

- ❑ By 2020: increase city-wide and neighbourhood food assets by a minimum of 50 per cent over 2010 levels (*Greenest City Action Plan/Food Strategy/Park Board Local Food Action Plan*).

Indicators in this Fact Sheet

- Food Assets
- Neighbourhood Food Networks
- Distribution of Food Retail
- Access to Affordable, Culturally-Appropriate Food
- Food Production

Key Findings

- Food assets are **increasing** across the city.
- Neighbourhood food networks help approximately **20,000 people** access healthy, affordable and nutritious food.
- Food access in Vancouver is **not equitable**, and many residents face food affordability and security challenges.

Why it Matters

Food plays a powerful role in connecting people, in building strong and resilient communities and in preventing and managing chronic illnesses. Building sustainable food systems is a fast-growing movement. In 2013, the City of Vancouver adopted the *Vancouver Food Strategy*, setting a number of goals and actions toward a just and sustainable food system.

The *Food Strategy* is intended to address a number of gaps and vulnerabilities in the food system. These include unequal access to healthy, affordable food; opportunities to better support the local food economy; and making more resources available for underserved and vulnerable communities. There are also gaps in infrastructure and the food supply chain with respect to processing and distribution for local and mid-scale food businesses in the city. Added to these challenges are socio-economic trends across Canada including a growing income gap, social polarization, child poverty, unaffordable housing, rising rates of hunger, increases in food prices and rising rates of preventable diseases. These issues, coupled with global vulnerabilities including climate change and losses of agricultural land, mean it's critical for Vancouver to bolster the resilience of our food systems.

The City of Vancouver, in partnership with the Vancouver Food Policy Council and many other community organizations, has been working to create a just and sustainable food system for the past decade. In addition to focusing on different aspects of the food system, the City's approach to food policy is grounded by a commitment to build social capital and human capacity through various policy and community development initiatives.

About this Fact Sheet

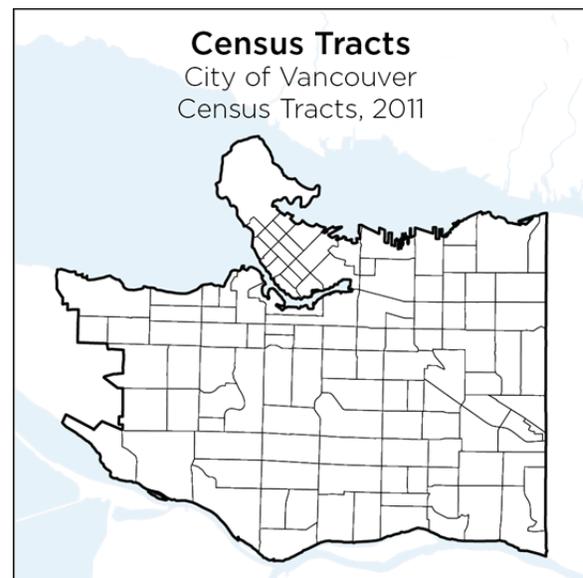
This series reports on social indicators and trends related to the 12 long-term goals of the City of Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy. More information on the Strategy is available online at vancouver.ca/healthycity4all. **Feeding Ourselves Well** explores indicators of the health of Vancouver's food system, building on work completed as part of Vancouver's **Food Strategy**.

Social research is always imprecise and uncertain. Collaboration, replication and information sharing are crucial to building a more complete and rigorous picture of health and well-being in Vancouver. Readers are encouraged to provide feedback, ask questions and to engage in exploring and interpreting the information presented here.

Areas of Study

Information in this fact sheet is presented for a number of different geographies. Comparisons between Metro Vancouver and other regions refer to individual census metropolitan areas, as defined by Statistics Canada. Statistics for the Vancouver Health Service Delivery Area include residents of the City of Vancouver, the University of British Columbia Endowment Lands and the Musqueam First Nation community on the Fraser River.

Within the City of Vancouver, this fact sheet provides information organized in two ways. The map below left illustrates Vancouver's local planning areas (neighbourhoods).



This fact sheet also makes use of data organized by census tract. The above right map illustrates the 117 census tracts that comprise the City of Vancouver and Musqueam First Nation. They approximate, but do not correspond to, the City's officially defined local areas.

Engaging with Data Sources

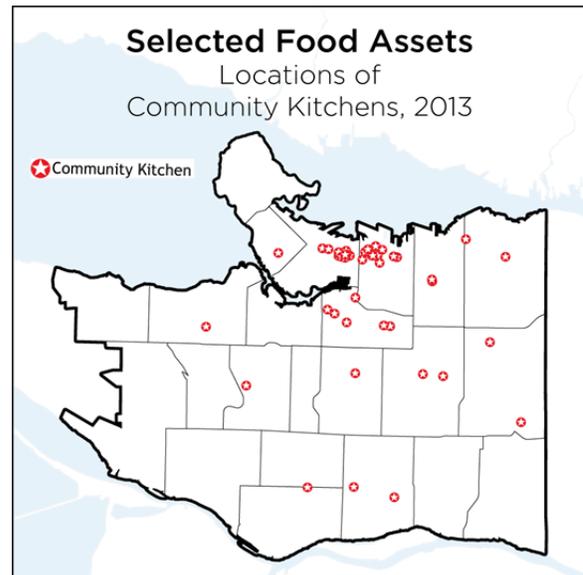
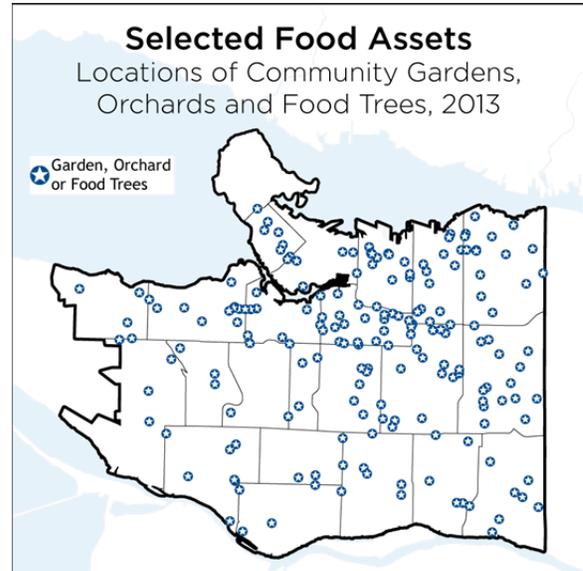
Sources used are noted in each section of this fact sheet. Key online resources include:

- Information from **Statistics Canada's** Census of Population and National Household Survey is available online at statcan.gc.ca. Custom neighbourhood profiles ordered by the City of Vancouver are available at data.vancouver.ca.
- Some **City of Vancouver** food asset and business license data are tracked and shared through the City's open data catalogue at data.vancouver.ca.

Indicator: Food Assets

Food assets are resources, facilities, services and spaces available to residents, and used to support the local food system. While a baseline for the city's food system continues to evolve, there are a number of community food assets that provide opportunities for residents to be more involved in local food initiatives. Some key food assets in the city are documented below.

Selected Food Assets			
Asset Type	2010	2013	2020 (Projected)
Community Garden Plots	3,260	4,432	5,000
Community Orchards	3	33	22
Urban Farms	1	18	30
Farmers Markets	4	10	22
Community Food Markets	3	7	9
Community Kitchens	69	69	85
Composting Facilities	0	1	3



Data Sources

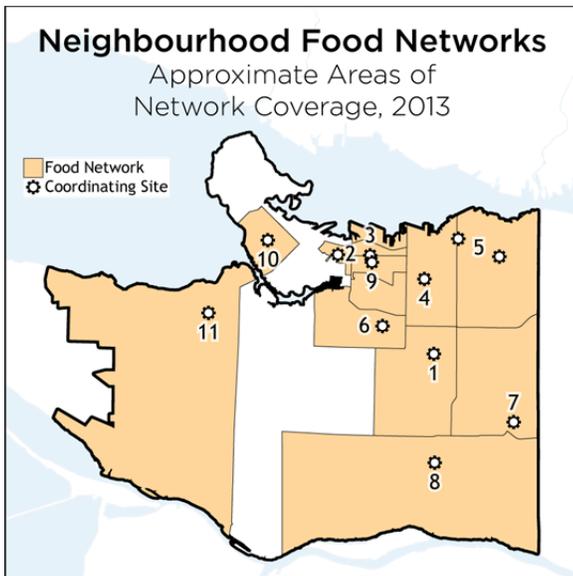
Food assets compiled by City of Vancouver Food Policy, 2012-2013. Vancouver's Food Strategy is available online at vancouver.ca/foodpolicy.

Indicator: Neighbourhood Food Networks

Neighbourhood Food Networks (NFNs) are coalitions of citizens, organizations and agencies that work collaboratively across Vancouver neighbourhoods to address food system issues with the goal of improving access to healthy, affordable and nutritious food for all. NFNs are powerful community-based engines that facilitate and catalyze action, knowledge and skill-building on a range of food system issues. They build strong neighbourhoods through food-based programs including community gardening, healthy eating, multicultural cooking clubs, seniors’ cooking classes, and nutritional label knowledge/literacy. These activities enable learning, sharing and celebration opportunities connected to food.

In 2012, approximately 20,000 people participated in neighbourhood food networks. The City’s goal is to continue to build awareness and support and to strengthen participation in neighbourhood food networks. The presence and participation rates in neighbourhood food networks will continue to be measured over time.

The City also supports non-profit organizations undertaking various work related to Vancouver’s food system through grants. In 2013-2014, approximately \$150,000 was allocated through Sustainable Food Systems grants.



Neighbourhood Food Networks	
#	Food Network Name
1	Cedar Cottage Food Network
2	Downtown Eastside Kitchen Tables Project
3	Downtown Eastside Right to Food Network
4	Grandview-Woodland Food Connection
5	Hastings-Sunrise Community Food Network
6	Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Food Network
7	Renfrew-Collingwood Food Security Institute
8	South Vancouver Food Network
9	Strathcona Food Program
10	West End Neighbourhood Food Network
11	Westside Food Collaborative

Data Sources

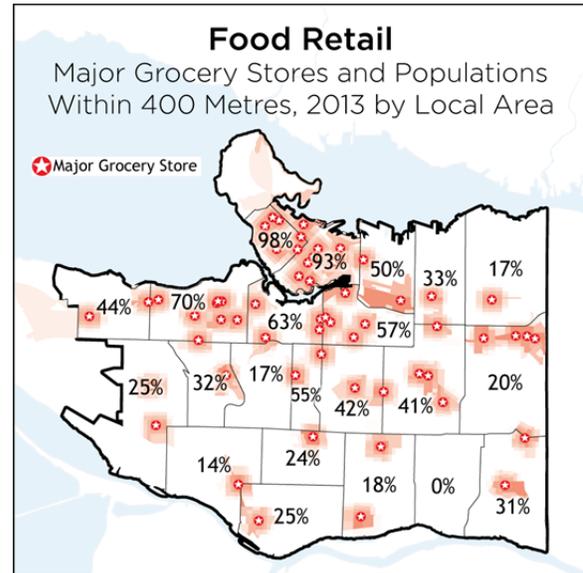
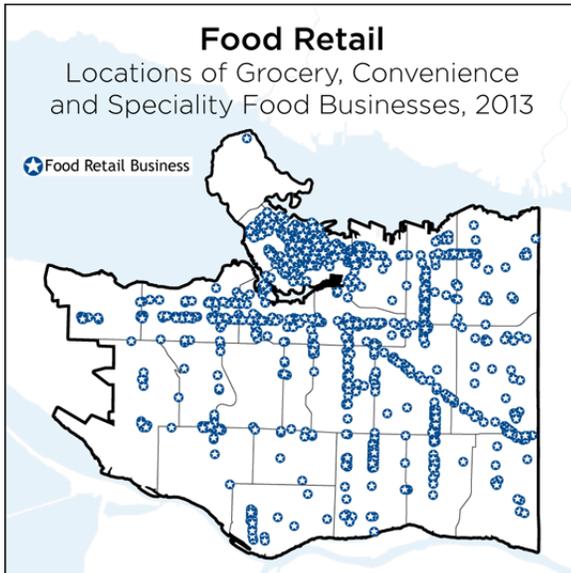
Geographical coverage of NFNs is adapted from Paula Carr and Zsusi Fodor, “Sustainability on the Table: A Way Forward for Vancouver’s Neighbourhood Food Networks,” 2012.

The number of people participating in NFNs is a self-reported figure by NFN grant recipients, estimating the number of people that engaged with or benefitted from their work. There is the potential of over-reporting or multiple-counting of participants, and there is also the potential for under-reporting as not all NFNs receive city grants at all times.

Indicator: Distribution of Food Retail

Restaurants, grocery stores, convenience stores and other businesses are important components of the food retail landscape. Land use planning plays a key role in shaping the private sector, particularly zoning and licensing that enable certain types of business to open in certain locations.

The map below on the left shows food retail licences, such as grocery stores, produce markets, convenience stores and other retail stores that sell food.



The map above on the right shows the percentages of each neighbourhood's population within walking distance of a major grocery store. By only including major stores, this understates actual food access, as many Vancouverites use corner stores and produce markets in their communities. In addition, the stores' locations do not measure the affordability, quantity, quality or cultural appropriateness of food sold. In the West End, for example, most residents are located near a major grocery store, but this by itself is not sufficient to assess how accessible food is for them.

Food access is not equal throughout the city. Access to food is a critical component of a complete, walkable community. The City can promote the development of healthy food retail, particularly in lower income and underserved areas, to better support access to healthy and affordable food for all Vancouverites. Healthy food retail can build a stronger local economy, promote green jobs and move toward stronger communities.

Data Sources

This section relies on City of Vancouver business licence data, available online through the City's open data catalogue at data.vancouver.ca.

Block-level population estimates are adapted from Statistics Canada's 2011 Census of Population. Note that distance calculations are based on "crow-flight" paths, not actual walking routes or conditions.

Indicator: Access to Affordable, Culturally Appropriate Food

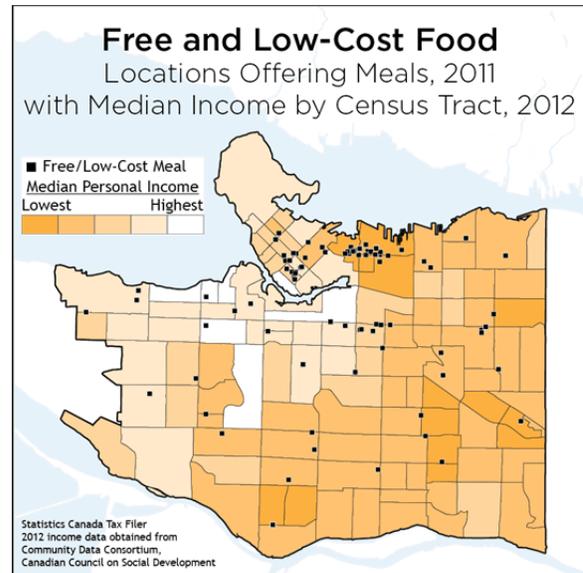
Access to food is a complex concept to measure and to address. Barriers to accessing affordable and appropriate food include income levels, purchasing power, proximity to places where food is sold, mobility, lack of food knowledge or lack of space for food storage and preparation. As well, the adequacy of food is an important consideration: is available food healthy, nutritious, culturally appropriate and available in sufficient quantities?

No one indicator can adequately cover all components of this concept, so this section compiles data on different aspects of food accessibility from multiple data sources.

Income and Access to Low-Cost Food

While the City would ideally like to reduce and eventually eliminate the charity food model and the need for free meals, the map at right illustrates one indicator of the existing concentration of food insecurity. It combines free and low-cost meals with median incomes in 2010. Note that the National Household Survey data can only represent a partial picture of income, and that the quality of free or low-cost meals is not measured.

Concentrations of services are seen in Downtown South and the Downtown Eastside. However, there are a number of meal programs in most areas of the city. While the concentrations noted above indicate the areas of highest need, the broad distribution of subsidized meals suggests that residents throughout the city require access to more affordable food.

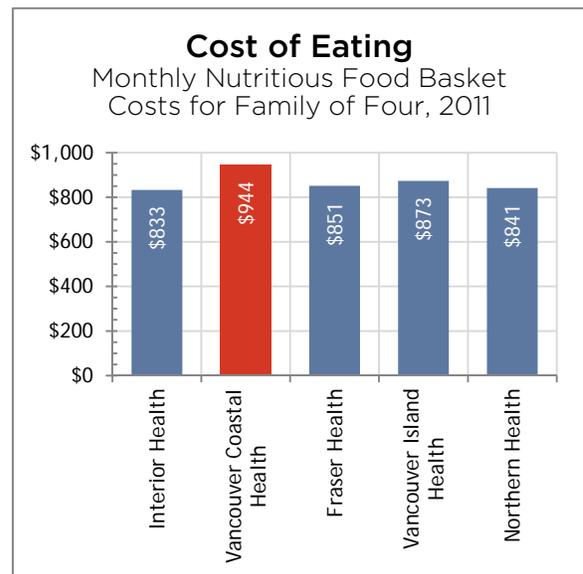


Cost of Healthy Eating

Health Canada's National Nutritious Food Basket (NNFB) is a tool for monitoring the cost and affordability of healthy eating. The NNFB describes about 60 foods that represent a basic nutritious diet for people of different ages and sexes.

The Dieticians of Canada have researched the cost of a NNFB in British Columbia's five Health regions. The cost of a healthy food basket for a family of four in the Vancouver Coastal Health region was approximately \$944 per month in 2011, the highest in the province.

A key and consistent finding is that income assistance recipients do not receive adequate income for a healthy food basket—food and shelter costs would consume more than 100 per cent of their incomes.



Social Indicators and Trends 2014: Feeding Ourselves Well

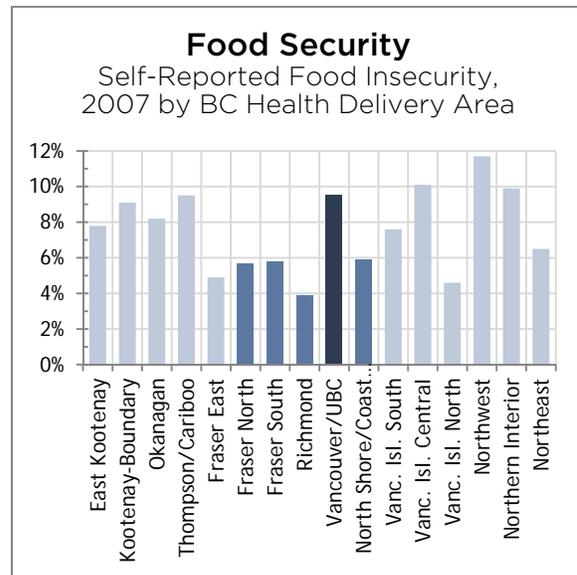
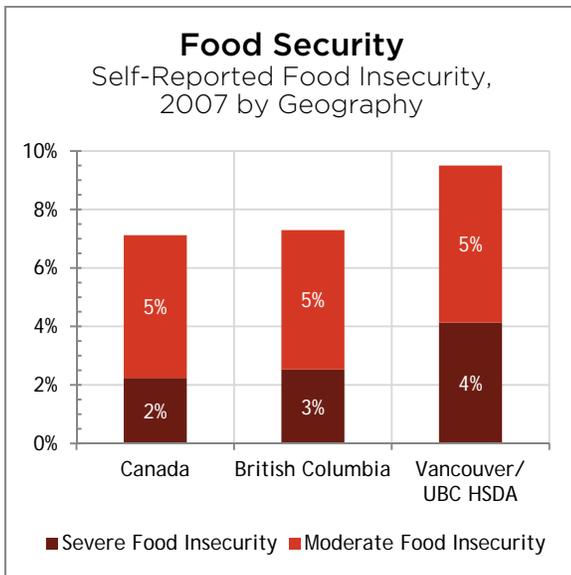
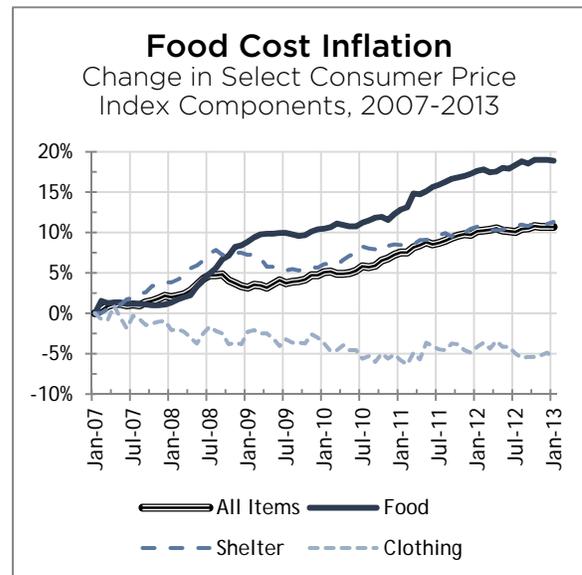
General Food Costs

Food is becoming more expensive. The increase of food prices in relation to the rate of inflation is another important indicator of food access. According to Statistics Canada data, food prices in Canada have increased faster than any other major component of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) since 2007. Between 2007 and 2013, food prices grew at an average annualized rate of 3.5 per cent compared to 2.1 per cent for the overall CPI. Some of the largest increases in costs since 2007 have been in cereal and bakery products and coffee and tea.

Low-income families and individuals are disproportionately likely to be impacted by increasing food prices.

Self-Reported Food Insecurity

Many Vancouverites report facing barriers to accessing food. The 2007 Canadian Community Health Survey included questions on household food security. The Vancouver Health Service Delivery Area, which includes the City of Vancouver, the UBC Endowment Lands and the Musqueam First Nation, exhibited higher rates of food insecurity than many other health areas, and higher rates than BC and Canada overall.



Data Sources

Free and low-cost meals were compiled by Vancouver Coastal Health, 2011. 2010 Income data is from Statistics Canada's 2011 National Household Survey.

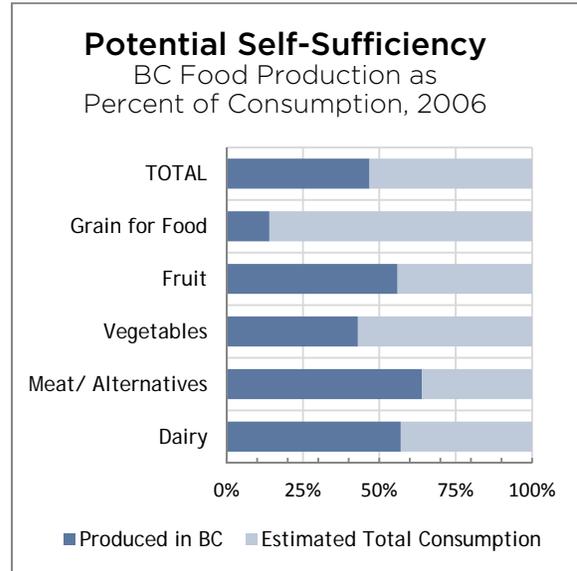
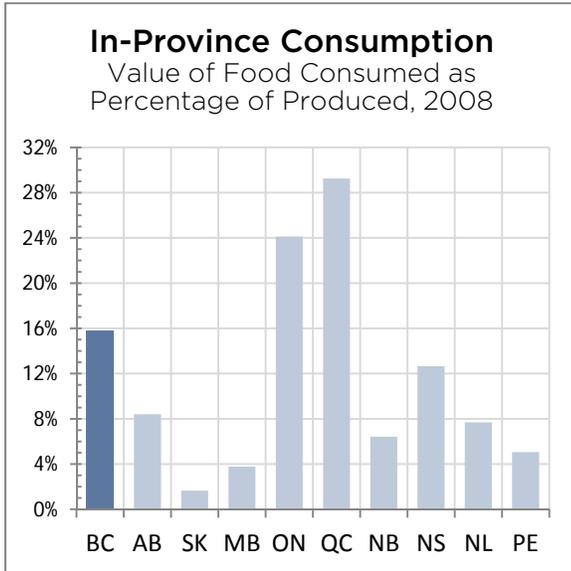
Cost of eating calculations are adapted from the Dietitians of Canada, *Cost of Eating in British Columbia 2011*. The report can be downloaded from dietitians.ca.

Changes in Consumer Price Index components are calculated using Statistics Canada's CANSIM table 326-0022, with further analysis being published in an *Economic Insights* analytical paper, "The Increase in Food Prices Between 2007 and 2012", catalogue number 11-626-X. All data can be obtained at statcan.gc.ca.

Information on self-reported food security in 2007 is derived from the Canadian Community Health Survey, available in CANSIM table 105-0407 at statcan.gc.ca.

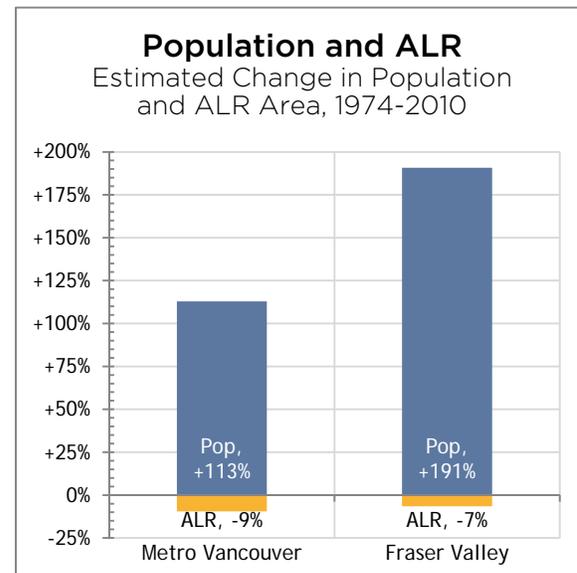
Indicator: Food Production

Local food production is an important aspect of a just and sustainable food system. It reduces financial and environmental costs of food, and improves accessibility to quality, healthy food.



BC has mild weather, a long growing season and a high growing capacity. In 2006, BC farms had the capacity to produce 47 per cent of all food consumed in BC. However, much food is exported or wasted: 2008 Conference Board figures found that only 16 per cent of the economic value of BC food was consumed here.

The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a provincial land use designation intended to preserve food production land. However, there is pressure to develop the ALR. Between 1974 and 2010, there has been a net loss of nine per cent of ALR land in Metro Vancouver and seven per cent in the Fraser Valley. At a time of huge population growth, this challenges regional food production, and underscores the complex issues in land-use planning within and between cities, regions and the province.



Urban food production in the city can build the local economy and produce healthy foods close to home. There are 18 urban farm businesses in the City of Vancouver that produce food on roughly 40 sites of different sizes using various techniques.

Data Sources

Information on food self-sufficiency is adapted from the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands' publication *B.C.'s Food Self-Reliance: Can B.C.'s Farmers Feed Our Growing Population?* available at agf.gov.bc.ca; and from the Conference Board of Canada's 2013 report *Cultivating Opportunities: Canada's Growing Appetite for Local Food*.

ALR statistics are available through the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission, alc.gov.bc.ca. 1974 population estimates were interpolated from census data with assistance from Metro Vancouver and FVRD staff. 2010 figures are from BC Stats Population estimates.

Toward a Healthy City for All

Creating a just and sustainable food system can only be achieved through the collective efforts of many different groups. Local governments, individuals, community groups, institutions, agencies, businesses, governmental partners and other stakeholders must actively work together to achieve our food system and sustainability goals. These include:

- Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
- Vancouver School Board
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Metro Vancouver and neighbouring municipal governments
- Vancouver Food Policy Council

The City's Role

To better support a just and sustainable food system, a number of City entities have been identified:

- Greenest City Action Plan Steering Committee
- City of Vancouver Food Systems Steering Committee
- City of Vancouver inter-departmental technical teams
- Vancouver Park Board Local Food Asset Task Force

Some specific actions the City is undertaking include:

- **Food Production** - supporting and enabling community food assets (e.g. community gardens and urban farms) and making stronger connections to all parts of the food system
- **Empowering Residents** - enhancing access for individuals to participate in the activities of neighbourhood food networks and other community-based food programs, particularly for vulnerable and isolated groups.
- **Food Access** - improving access to healthy, local, affordable food for all by increasing the number of healthy food retail including farmers markets, community food markets, and piloting healthy food programs.

Your Turn

Achieving a healthy city for all is a collective challenge for governments, organizations, the private sector and individuals. We all have a role to achieve the goal of **Feeding Ourselves Well**, and the target belongs to all of us:

- How can we collectively increase citywide and neighbourhood food assets to ensure Vancouver has a healthy, just and sustainable food system?

Learn more and get involved at vancouver.ca/healthycity4all.