



What feeds us:

# Vancouver Food Strategy

January, 2013

Photo: Thien Phan



CITY OF  
VANCOUVER

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Photo: Laura MacDonald

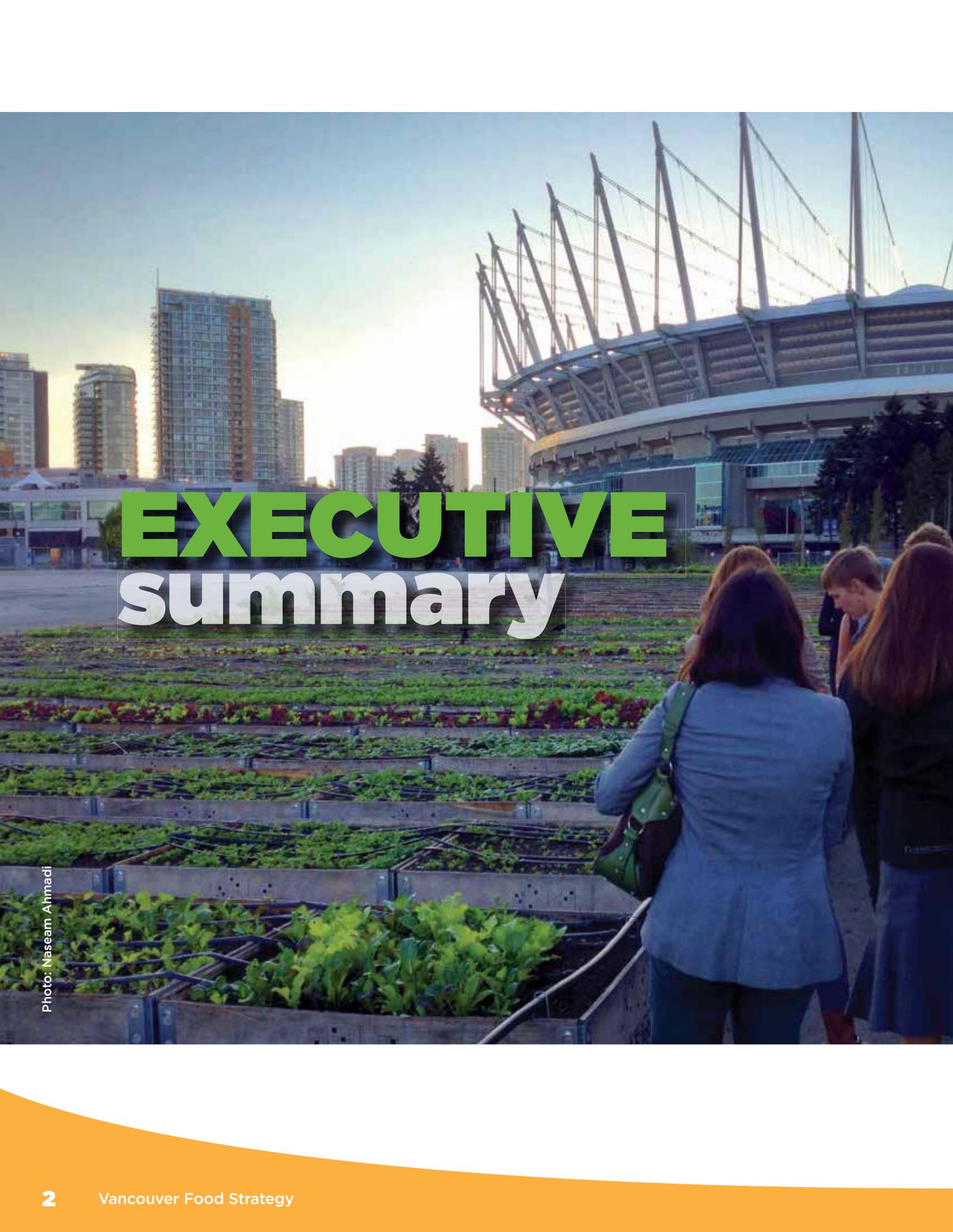
# Forward from Vancouver Food Policy Council

The development of the Vancouver Food Strategy is another exciting step in the development of a just and sustainable food system for Vancouver. The vision, goals and actions build upon years of work that the City of Vancouver has done together with the Vancouver Food Policy Council. The Food Strategy lays out the framework for future actions across Vancouver's food system. Given the many challenges that lie ahead — climate change and resource depletion, growing inequity, loss of farmland and farmers, and rising health care costs from diet-related illness — it is critical that cities and citizens around the world play their part. The Food Strategy lays out a road map for how food assets can be expanded in neighbourhoods across the city to develop a more resilient and equitable food system.

A food strategy is a powerful tool for the City to use to meet its social, environmental, economic and health goals. By taking a coordinated approach to all that the City can do in relation to food, the Food Strategy provides the platform to integrate different goals and actions to create new synergies. The Vancouver Food Policy Council commends the City of Vancouver for setting out this bold initiative. We also look forward to continuing to provide direction and support as we collectively strive for a just and sustainable food system for Vancouver!

*Brent Mansfield and Trish Kelly*

*Co-chairs, Vancouver Food Policy Council*



# EXECUTIVE summary

Photo: Naseem Ahmadi

**T**he City of Vancouver has been working to support a just and sustainable food system since 2003 in partnership with the Vancouver Food Policy Council and countless community organizations. The City's commitment to creating a just and sustainable food system builds on food systems initiatives and grassroots community development that dates back decades in our city and province. Vancouver takes a systems approach to food policy and planning. This means considering all aspects of the food system from seed to table to compost heap and back again.

In many ways, Vancouver's food system is already very robust. Citizen interest in community gardens, farmers markets, urban farms, beekeeping, backyard hens and other community food projects has never been higher. Citizen coalitions are actively engaging residents around a wide range of food system projects and activities.

However, in spite of the strong foundation of food system assets that Vancouver enjoys, there are a number of gaps and vulnerabilities. Across Vancouver's neighbourhoods, there is considerable variation in socio-economic and demographic conditions. Added to all of these challenges are disturbing socio-economic trends across Canada including a growing income gap, social polarization, child poverty, unaffordable housing, and rising rates of hunger and preventable diseases. These issues, coupled with global pressures including climate change, dramatic losses of agricultural land, and increasingly distant food supply chains means that bolstering the resilience of Vancouver's food system is critical.

**The** importance of creating a coordinated food strategy for Vancouver is not only a response to vulnerabilities and challenges, but equally in response to the recognition of what food brings to the city. Food is an issue that galvanizes communities and catalyzes action like few other topics can. It greens the environment, promotes biodiversity, contributes to the local economy and provides countless opportunities for education, social inclusion and community-building. For all of these reasons, the time for Vancouver's food strategy is now.

A food strategy is an official plan or road map that helps city governments integrate the full spectrum of urban food system issues within a single policy framework that includes food production (typically referred to as urban agriculture), food processing, distribution, access and food waste management. Not only do food strategies coordinate and integrate stand alone food policies, they also embed them within broader sustainability goals.

The importance of creating a coordinated food strategy for Vancouver is identified in the Vancouver Food Charter (2007) and the local food goal of the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan (GCAP) (2011). GCAP calls for Vancouver to become a global leader in urban food systems (Goal #10). The overall local food target is to increase city and neighbourhood food assets by 50 per cent by the year 2020. Examples of food assets include community gardens and orchards, urban farms, farmers markets, food processing infrastructure, community composting facilities, and neighbourhood food networks.

**F**rom summer 2011 to spring 2012, City staff worked in close partnership with the Vancouver Food Policy Council on a public engagement process under the slogan *talk food with us*. A number of creative formats were used to gather feedback that shaped the proposed Vancouver Food Strategy. These included roundtable discussions with key stakeholder groups, storytelling-themed public events, health and education fairs, and targeted outreach to ethno-cultural communities. New media including twitter and a blog were also used. In total, community consultation reached over 2,200 people.

The Vancouver Food Strategy is the result of consultations, analysis and applying lessons learned from other municipal food strategies. To help Vancouver think, plan and engage in purposeful action towards creating a just and sustainable food system, the Vancouver Food Strategy lays out a vision and principles, goals, and a comprehensive list of actions, and targets to measure our progress towards the goals.

The strategy begins with history, context, and consultation process. It then reaffirms the food strategy, presents mid-level goals that delve deeper into the vision and principles, and shows what a resilient food system contributes to creating a healthy and sustainable city. Finally, it details the specific actions or ingredients that will be necessary to achieve the vision, principles and goals.

**The** comprehensive list of actions identified in the Vancouver Food Strategy will serve to integrate individual food policies into a more coordinated food systems approach, and align food system goals within broader City plans and processes. Among the full list of actions, five priority action areas have been identified that will be the main focus of activity during the next three years. The five priorities represent areas where Vancouver has the biggest opportunity for success, and ability to significantly move the dial on our food system goals. This does not mean that other actions will not be undertaken. Rather, the priority areas will provide a first focus, while still moving other food system actions forward. Table 1 outlines the five priority



Photo: Thien Phan

**Table 1: Five priority action areas of the Vancouver Food Strategy**

Action Area	Priority Focus
<b>1. Food production</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and enable all forms of urban agriculture (specifically community gardens and urban farms), and make stronger connections with all parts of the food system.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Empowering Residents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance access for individuals to participate in the activities of neighbourhood food networks and other community-based food programs, particularly for vulnerable and isolated groups.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Food access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve 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 retail programs.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Food processing and distribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address gaps in local food processing, storage and distribution infrastructure by exploring possibilities that might include a food business incubator or food hub.</li> <li>• Increase the percentage of local and sustainable food purchased by City facilities.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Food waste</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce food waste going to landfill or incinerator.</li> <li>• Expand and support food waste disposal programs.</li> <li>• Expand local collection and composting options</li> </ul>

action areas. The full list of actions (short, medium and long-term) appears in the Appendix of the document.

The Vancouver Food Strategy concludes with information about food strategy implementation, including monitoring and evaluating our progress.

Accountability is essential to successful implementation of the Vancouver Food Strategy. Because of the many issues and stakeholder groups involved in creating a just and sustainability food system, collective responsibility is key. This means active participation not only by local government, but equally by individual citizens, community groups, institutions, agencies, businesses, governmental partners and other stakeholders. Only by working together will we achieve our food system and sustainability goals.



Photo: Thien Phan

Photo: Joanna Clark

# LOCAL sustainable

# Introduction

**F**rom ancient times to the present day, food has been central to the health and well-being of cities. Over the course of the 20th-century, global changes placed tremendous pressure on cities and their food systems, resulting in pollution due to long distance transportation of food, a sharp rise in diet-related preventable diseases, rising food costs, interruptions in food supply, and dramatic losses of agricultural land needed to feed a growing global population.

These changes, coupled with broader challenges related to climate change, environmental degradation, and public health crises, have lead city dwellers — now the majority of the world’s population — to realize the countless ways that food affects our communities and our daily lives, both globally and locally.

There is now a growing recognition that we all have a stake in our food system whether it’s having a local food market within walking or cycling distance or enjoying the opportunity to grow our own food, getting to know our local growers, having access to affordable, nutritious and culturally diverse food, participating in community composting programs, or taking part in community food celebrations.

Local and sustainable food fuels healthy and vibrant communities: it makes up an important part of the local economy, and acts as a powerful catalyst for fostering inclusive neighbourhoods.

Today, food is reappearing on the agenda of a growing number of municipal governments. Dozens of city governments across North America and beyond are once again directly involved with food systems as an integral part of their mandated responsibilities.

## Why local and sustainable food?

Seeking to increase local and sustainably produced food means:

- reducing or eliminating pesticides, fertilizers and hormones
- ensuring safe and fair working conditions for farm workers
- providing humane conditions for animals
- protecting and enhancing habitat and biodiversity
- and reducing energy consumption and polluting emissions in food production, processing, distribution and waste management.

## Food strategy structure

To help Vancouver think, plan and engage in purposeful action towards creating a just and sustainable food system, the food strategy lays out a vision and principles, goals, a comprehensive list of actions, and targets to measure our progress towards the goals. Notably, the strategy:

1. Begins with historical context and description of the consultation process.
2. Reaffirms the vision and principles already embodied in the Vancouver Food Charter.
3. Presents mid-level goals that delve deeper into the vision and principles, and show what a resilient food system contributes to creating a healthy and sustainable city.
4. Lays out current or emerging guidelines or programs where the City of Vancouver is directly involved. They are organized according to parts of the food system. Each area has a number of specific actions or ingredients that will be necessary to achieve the vision, principles and goals. (See Appendix.)

Among all of the identified actions, five priority areas have been identified that will be the main focus of activity over the next three years. The five priorities represent areas where Vancouver must take action to significantly move the dial on our food system goals. This does not mean that other actions will not be undertaken. Rather, the priority areas will provide a first focus, while still moving other food system actions forward. Information about the specific actions and deliverables associated with each priority area are detailed in the Actions section.

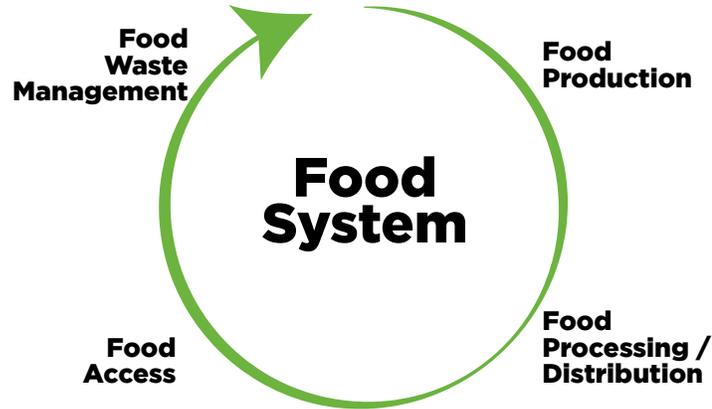
The food strategy concludes with information about implementation, including the ways that we will evaluate and monitor of our progress.

### **Just and sustainable food system**

The City of Vancouver defines a just and sustainable food system as one in which food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional well-being of our city and its residents.

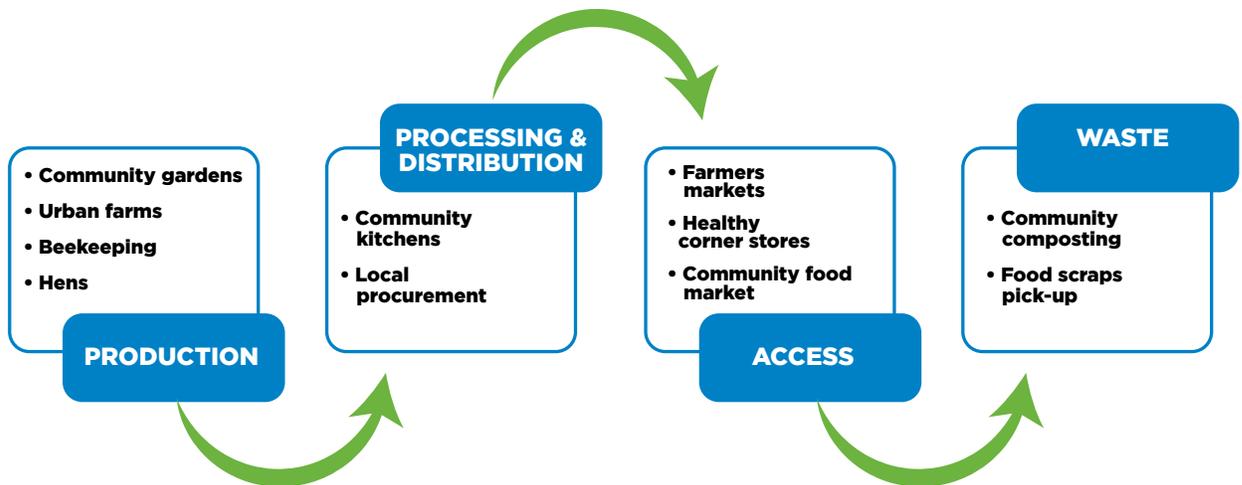
# Vancouver's food policy history

The City of Vancouver, in partnership with the Vancouver Food Policy Council and countless community organizations, has been working to create a just and sustainable food system for the past decade. In June 2003, Council called for the creation of a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver. This mandate built on decades of community organizing and activism on food system issues in our province and city.



Vancouver takes a systems approach to food policy and planning. This involves considering all aspects of the food system, including food production, processing, distribution, access and food waste management.

Although there is considerable overlap between parts of the food system, and productive links between them, examples of activities that fall under each part of the food system include the following:



In addition to focusing on different aspects of the food system, the City's approach to food policy is underpinned by a commitment to building social capital and human capacity through mechanisms such as the Vancouver Food Policy Council, Vancouver's neighbourhood food networks and other community supports. This collaborative, systems approach to food has produced important outcomes such as more community gardens and farmers markets, support for neighbourhood food networks, and the creation of the Vancouver Food Charter.

Since 2003, Vancouver's food policies and programs have taken root and flourished. Some of the biggest policy and program milestones include:

- City Council motion (2003)
- Vancouver Food Policy Council (created in 2004)
- Guidelines for urban beekeeping (2005)
- Vancouver Food Charter (2007)
- Urban agriculture design guidelines for the private realm (2009)
- 2010 Garden Plots by 2010 Initiative (2010)
- Guidelines for keeping backyard hens (2010)
- Food scraps collection program (2010)
- Interim Farmers Market policy (2010)
- Street food program expansion (2010-2012)
- Greenest City Grants in support of urban agriculture (2009-2011)
- Grants to support neighbourhood food networks (2009-2012)
- Greenest City Action Plan Local Food Area (2011)
- Grant to support Urban Farming Forum (2011)

## Vancouver's food facts

Vancouver's first ever farmers market took place at Trout Lake Community Centre in 1995. There are now nine farmers markets throughout the city.

Vancouver has 446 fruit trees in 18 orchards and parks around the City.

Vancouver has 97 community gardens with over 3,900 plots on City, park, school and private land.

Vancouver's Street Food Vending Program boasts 103 vendors representing a wide range of countries and cultures.

Roughly one-third of our food depends on pollinators, including honey bees. Hobby beekeeping provides increased biodiversity and pollination for food-producing and ornamental plants.

City policies and programs are the building blocks that Vancouver residents and organizations can use to advance our collective commitment to healthy sustainable communities, including a sustainable food system.

## What municipal food strategies can do

- Provide a roadmap for action
- Integrate the full spectrum of food system issues within a single policy framework
- Align food systems within broad sustainability goals
- Identify gaps and prioritize actions
- Operate at site-specific, neighbourhood, and city-wide scales

## From individual stand alone food policies to a coordinated food strategy

A new trend in municipal food policy-making around the world has emerged in the form of comprehensive municipal food strategies. Instead of treating food system issues in isolation, food strategies aim to coordinate the full spectrum of urban food system issues within one policy framework that integrates food production food processing, distribution, access and food waste management. In this way, we can think of a food strategy as a plan

or road map that helps city governments focus on coordinated goals and actions to improve their local food system. A food strategy builds upon the work already underway to improve urban food systems, creates links between them, integrate new ideas, addresses gaps, and creates a vision for the future.

While food strategies exist at other levels of government to address individual food issues (e.g. food and farming, agriculture and export, food safety), municipal food strategies tend to be customized for at least three reasons: first, because of their location within city governments; second, because of their attempt to treat food system issues holistically; and third, because of the ways they are situated within broader sustainability goals.

In recent years local governments including San Francisco, Philadelphia, New York, Seattle, Toronto, and London (U.K.) have developed such strategies. The results are argued to be further reaching than individual food policies, and more in keeping with a multi-functional approach to urban planning and development that aims to increase social, economic, environmental and health outcomes.

# Reasons for creating a Vancouver Food Strategy

In spite of tremendous progress made on food system issues in recent years, what is missing from Vancouver's food policy toolbox is a coordinated food strategy to link together existing policies and programs, and take our ability to achieve food system goals in the future.

The importance of creating a coordinated food strategy is identified in at least three existing City of Vancouver policies. It was first identified in 2004, in the Vancouver Food Action Plan. In 2007, the need was reinforced once again in the Vancouver Food Charter.

The most recent call for the creation of a coordinated food strategy comes in the form of the local food goal of the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan (GCAP). The GCAP calls for Vancouver to become a global leader in urban food systems (Goal #10). The overall local food target is to increase city and neighbourhood food assets by 50% by the year 2020. Examples of food assets include community gardens and orchards, urban farms, farmers markets, food processing infrastructure, community composting facilities, and neighbourhood food networks. The local food component of the GCAP states that in order to move further and faster towards the long-term goal of becoming a global leader in urban food systems there must be a higher degree of coordination and action planning between City departments, the Vancouver Food Policy Council, and the various policy programs that currently exist.



## Policy integration and alignment

Not only does the Vancouver Food Strategy integrate existing and emerging food policies under one coordinated policy framework, it also aligns the City's food system goals with broader policies and priorities including housing, planning, urban health and transportation. In this way, the food strategy achieves more impactful food system goals, while also adding value to City priorities that may not be directly food-related.

This approach reveals the importance of treating food systems as part of a broader set of priorities, instead of a stand alone topic. As author Carolyn Steel, reminds us: “food is a tool for re-thinking cities and the way we live in them.” The Vancouver Food Strategy embodies this sentiment by showing:



- what community gardens contribute to creating vibrant, healthy neighbourhoods
- how farmers markets serve as vibrant community gathering places that promote walkability and contribute to the local green economy
- the ways that buying local and sustainable food improves air quality by reducing emissions due to long distance transportation of food
- and how community kitchens in social housing sites improve access to healthy, affordable food for residents.

The net result is a healthier, more resilient city that weaves a just and sustainable food system into other sustainability goals.

For these reasons, the tenets of integrating individual food policies into a more coordinated food systems approach, and aligning food system goals within broader City plans and processes are central to Vancouver’s food strategy.

## Public engagement and input

Vancouver has a strong history of community involvement and activism on food system issues dating back decades. The evolution of Vancouver’s food policy mandate at the municipal level has depended on strong stakeholder partnerships at every step in the process. The Vancouver Food Policy Council is a key partner in all of the City’s food system activities. This partnership and others were key in gathering feedback and input on the food strategy. From summer 2011 to spring 2012, City staff worked in close partnership with the Vancouver Food Policy Council on a public engagement process under the slogan: “Talk food with us.”

A number of creative formats were used to gather feedback that shaped the Vancouver Food Strategy. These included roundtable discussions, storytelling and dialogue events, toolkits and exercises, workshops and focus groups. An estimated 2,200 individuals were reached to generate ideas for the Strategy.



# TALK FOOD WITH US



All photos: Thien Phan



# Consultation principles

The Food Strategy consultation process was based on four principles.

## 1. Engage ethno-culturally diverse communities

Recognizing the rich ethno-cultural diversity of our city, specific engagement techniques and formats were used that focused on multicultural communities and the organizations and non-profits that serve them. This outreach ranged from convening small roundtable meetings with immigrant settlement organizations, neighbourhood houses, front-line staff, and religious institutions, to events and dialogues with multicultural youth and the general public. These dialogues provided a much fuller and more nuanced picture of cultural communities' food system needs and aspirations. Outreach materials were translated into seven languages (Chinese, Punjabi, Farsi, Japanese, Vietnamese, Spanish, and French). Applying a cultural diversity lens continues to be a high priority in all aspects of food policy in Vancouver.

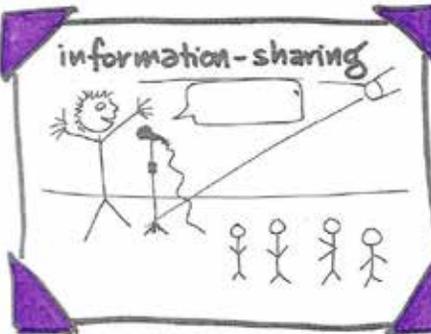
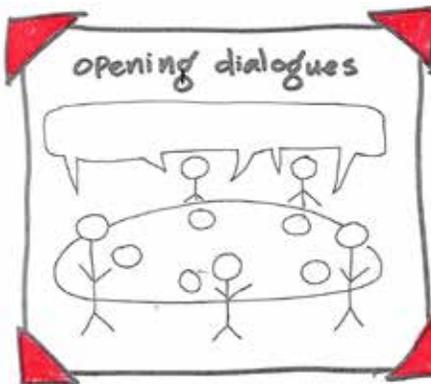


Organizations that provided valuable time and feedback included:

- Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies (AMSSA)
- Collingwood Neighbourhood House
- Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House
- Gordon Neighbourhood House
- Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISS B.C.)
- Inland Refugee Society (IRS)
- Khalsa Diwan Gurdwara Ross Street Temple
- Kiwassa Neighbourhood House
- La Boussole
- Little Mountain Neighbourhood House
- MOSAIC B.C.
- Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House
- Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS)
- South Vancouver Neighbourhood House
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S. BC
- YMCA of Greater Vancouver  
(affiliated with Downtown Intercultural Gardeners Society)

## 2. Engage socio-economically diverse, age-diverse, and harder-to-reach communities through storytelling

A second principle was to ensure that a number of groups were provided the opportunity to communicate their lived experiences. The importance of emphasizing personal “food stories” was prioritized during community consultation with socio-economically diverse, age-diverse, and harder-to-reach communities. Storytelling was used as a means of engaging groups and organizations, highlighting community priorities and personal connections with food. This included a public blog and a food-themed storytelling night that drew in over 400 attendees. Age-friendly youth events were held in partnership with various organizations, along with a focus on partnering with non-profit organizations to ensure that seniors were consulted throughout the process. These forms of outreach all emphasized stories to reflect the diverse ways that food shapes one’s experience of the city, while encouraging attendees to contribute their own food stories



Translated Outreach Material

Website

Articles and Advertisements

Twitter and Blog

Focus Groups

Stakeholder Roundtables

Toolkits and Exercises

Educational Workshops

Storytelling and Dialogue Events

Tabling and Facilitating Events

Presentations

Fairs

## 3. Emphasize collaboration and partnerships

The food strategy consultation was based on the principle that food system goals can only be achieved collaboratively by working closely with governmental and non-governmental partners. This includes Metro Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, and Vancouver School Board, as well as the numerous community coalitions that have arisen in recent years. Examples include the Vancouver Food Policy Council, Vancouver Urban Farming Society, neighbourhood food networks, and countless food-related non-profit organizations. The number and diversity of groups involved in



food system activities is a strong indicator that no single level of government or community organization is responsible sustainable food system. Success can only be achieved through a collaborative approach.

#### 4. Create tools and resources that can be used beyond the consultation process

Finally, the food strategy consultation was based on the principle that the city's food system goals can only be achieved collaboratively, working closely with governmental and non-governmental partners. This includes Metro Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health and Vancouver School Board. Numerous community coalitions have arisen in recent years, including the Vancouver Urban Farming Society, neighbourhood food networks, the Vancouver Street Food Association, and countless food-related non-profit organizations. The number and diversity of groups involved in food system activities is a strong

indicator that no single level of government or community organization is responsible in creating sustainable food systems. Throughout this process, ideas and feedback were generated on topic areas. This was captured and incorporated into different sections of the food strategy. Some of the priorities that emerged include:

Support innovative models and techniques to achieve food system goals, such as supporting food-related social enterprises and small businesses, innovative food infrastructure such as moveable raised beds for growing food and pop up produce markets.

Expand urban agriculture opportunities as a way to improve food system resiliency and promote social inclusion, such as community gardens or urban farming.

Create neighbourhood-based venues and mechanisms to enable community participation in food system activities such as supporting neighbourhood food networks and community food grants.

Improve access to healthy, sustainably produced food particularly for the city's most vulnerable, such as accesible healthy food retail options.

Enable broader participation in food system activities, such as strategies reflecting Vancouver's ethno-cultural diversity and engaging with youth.

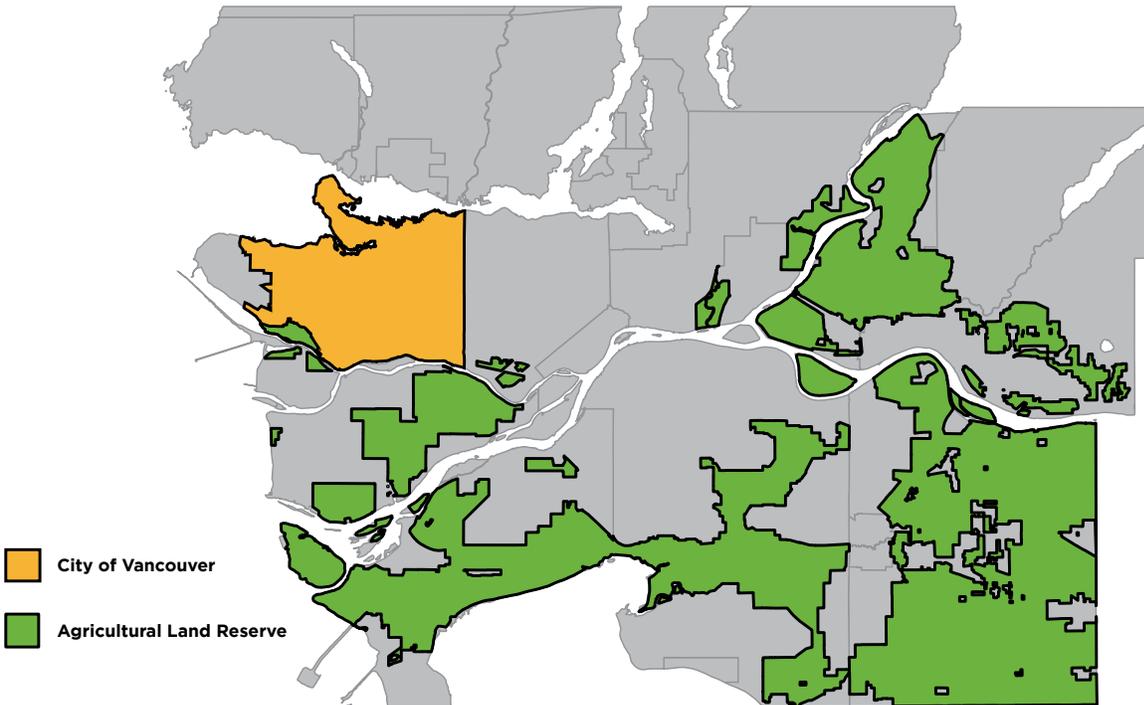
## Current condition of Vancouver's food system

It is important to establish the current condition of Vancouver's food system. Creating a baseline for a city's food system is a complex undertaking due to its inherently multi-faceted nature and the challenge of obtaining and updating meaningful data at a municipal or neighbourhood scale. While a number of methodological tools and indicators have been developed to try to tackle the challenge of measuring food system resilience, research reveals the importance of starting with a baseline of those data that are attainable and realistic, while recognizing that in many cases proxies must be used. This approach also recognizes the importance of setting food system indicators within broader a socio-economic, public health, ecological and economic context.

## About Vancouver

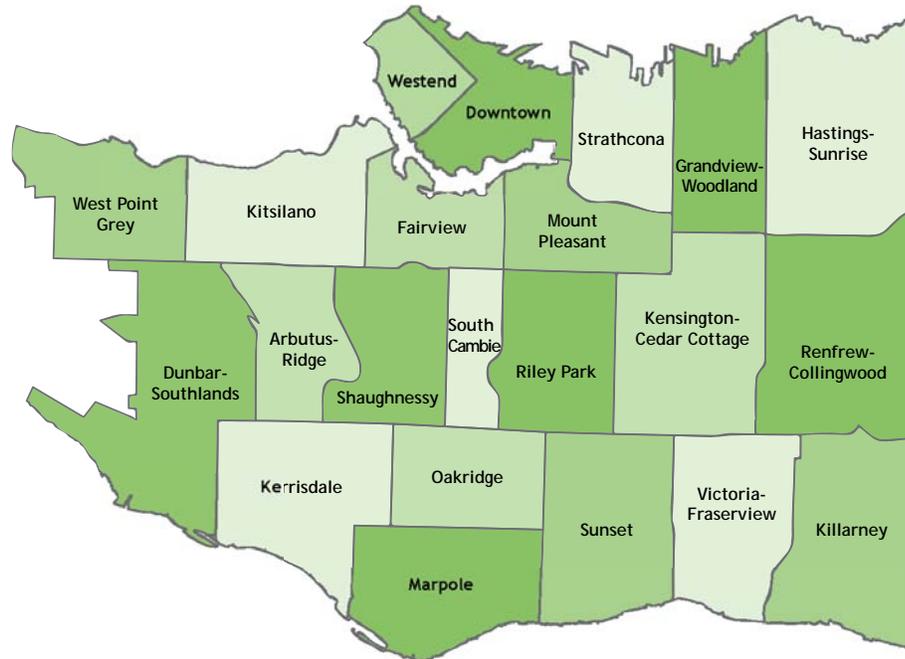
The City of Vancouver is one of 22 municipalities that comprise the Metro Vancouver region. Metro Vancouver is situated at the western edge of the rich and plentiful agricultural land of the Fraser Valley. The Fraser Valley has approximately 130,000 hectares of Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) — a provincial land zone in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use. This ALR land is considered one of the most productive peri-urban areas in North America. It is highly diversified, with over 200 agricultural products grown for local and international markets. The most prevalent food products are dairy and poultry, berries, greenhouse vegetables, field vegetables, and a wide variety of ‘niche’ food products. The value of the agricultural products produced in the Fraser Valley is over \$1.9 billion (2010) and continues to grow steadily.

**Map 1: Agricultural Land Reserve in Metro Vancouver**



Metro Vancouver is the third largest metropolitan area in Canada and has a population of 2.3 million (2011). Within that, the City of Vancouver has a population of 603,500 (2011) and is made up of 23 distinct neighbourhoods or local areas.

**Map 2: City of Vancouver neighbourhoods (local areas)**



## Baseline analysis of Vancouver’s food system

On many levels, Vancouver’s food system is very robust. Citizen interest in community gardens, farmers markets, urban farms, beekeeping, backyard hens and other community food projects has never been higher. Citizen coalitions including the Vancouver Food Policy Council, neighbourhood food networks, Vancouver Farmers Society, Vancouver Street Food Association, Village Vancouver, Environmental Youth Alliance and countless others are actively engaging citizens around a wide range of food system projects and activities.

One of the ways to create a baseline of Vancouver’s food system is to document these and other food assets. Food assets are defined as resources, facilities, services or spaces that are available to Vancouver residents, and which are used to support the local food system. This includes physical assets such as:

- community composting sites
- community food markets
- community fruit tree orchards
- community gardens
- community kitchens
- farmers markets
- street food vendors
- urban farms

These are not the only types of physical food assets, but some of the key assets that the City of Vancouver has the best ability to enable. Equally important are food assets that reflect the human capacity needed to bring physical food assets to life. Human capacity, or social, assets include the Vancouver Food Policy Council, neighbourhood food networks and other community coalitions. Table 2 outlines Vancouver’s current food assets

**Table 2: Summary of Food Assets  
(as of November, 2012)**

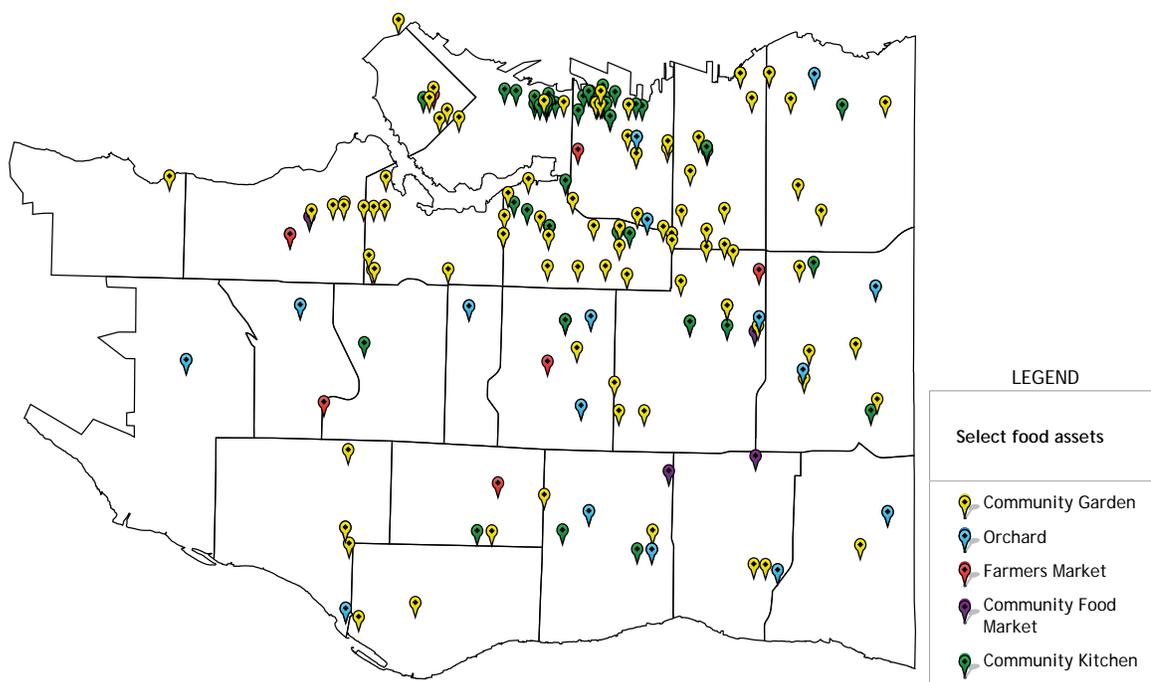
<b>Asset</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Community gardens</b>	There are 97 community gardens with a total of approximately 3,900 garden plots. This includes gardens located on City, Park, School and private lands. The gardens vary in scope and size, from only a few plots to gardens with over 100 plots.
<b>Urban farms</b>	There are 17 urban farms operating categorized into four types: backyard farms, institutional farms, rooftop farms and farms on private property.
<b>Community orchards</b>	There are 18 community orchards.
<b>Neighbourhood food networks</b>	Neighbourhood food networks are grassroots coalitions of citizens, organizations and agencies that work collaboratively to address food system issues with the goal of improving access to healthy, affordable and nutritious food for all. In 2011, almost 20,000 people were engaged in or directly benefited from the work of six NFNs. The City of Vancouver provides funding to six NFNs
<b>Farmers markets</b>	There are currently nine farmers markets.
<b>Community food markets</b>	Community food markets (mini farmers markets with fewer than 10 booths) have a mandate to improve access to fresh, affordable food. There are four community food markets, all operated by non-profit groups.
<b>Street food vendors</b>	There are approximately 103 street food vendors selling food that represents a wide diversity of cultures and cuisines.
<b>Community composting</b>	There are three community composting sites operating at farmers markets.

## Select physical food assets

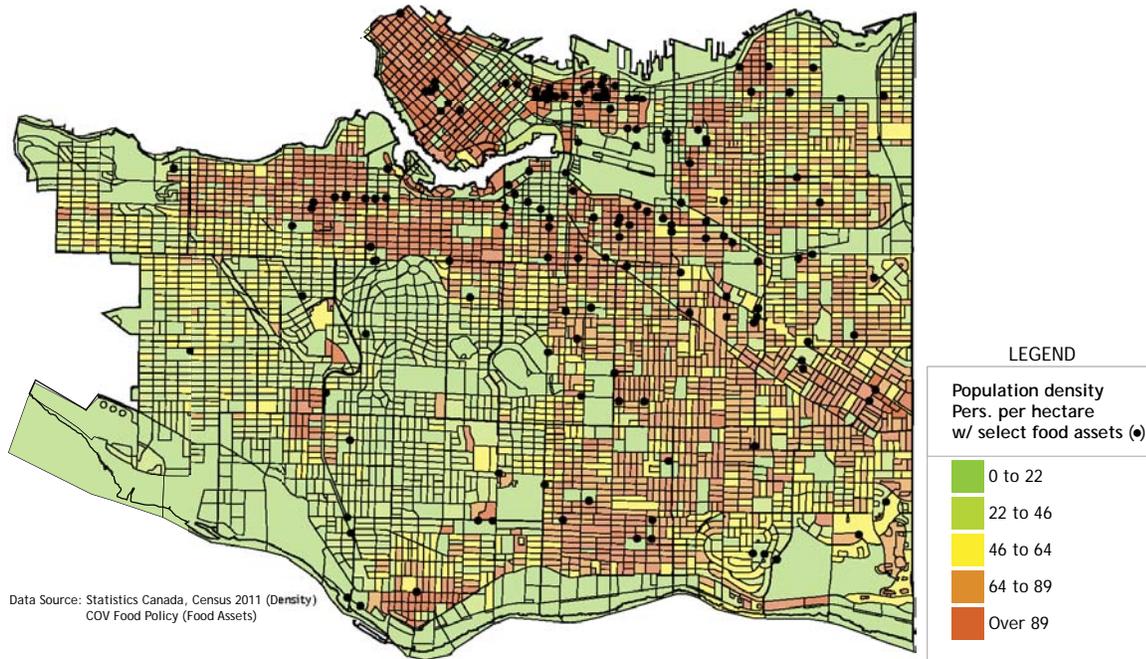
The following two maps show some of Vancouver's key food assets. Map 3 shows select food assets distinguished by type. Map 4 shows all of the food assets (not distinguished by type) correlated with population density.

By mapping Vancouver's select physical food assets and correlating them with population density, we can begin to gain a better picture of how access to food assets may vary across different parts of the city. Maps 3 and 4 show that parts of the city with the highest density have the highest number of food assets. However, this does not necessarily mean that the needs of our most vulnerable population groups are being met, or that we have sufficient food assets of all types to achieve our food system goals. This will be discussed in the section on Vancouver's food system gaps and vulnerabilities in a later section of the baseline analysis.

**Map 3: Select food assets, 2012**



**Map 4: 2011 population density by census tract with select food assets**



## Human capacity or social food assets

Alongside physical food assets are human capacity or social food assets. A growing number of active community coalitions contribute to Vancouver's landscape of social food assets. This includes the Vancouver Food Policy Council, Vancouver Urban Farmers Society, Vancouver Farmers Market Society, Village Vancouver, Environmental Youth Alliance and the Vancouver Street Food Association. Although all of these coalitions provide excellent measures of the strength of Vancouver's food system, the primary indicator that will be used in the Vancouver Food Strategy as a baseline of Vancouver's social food assets is the presence of neighbourhood food networks.

## Neighbourhood food networks (NFNs)

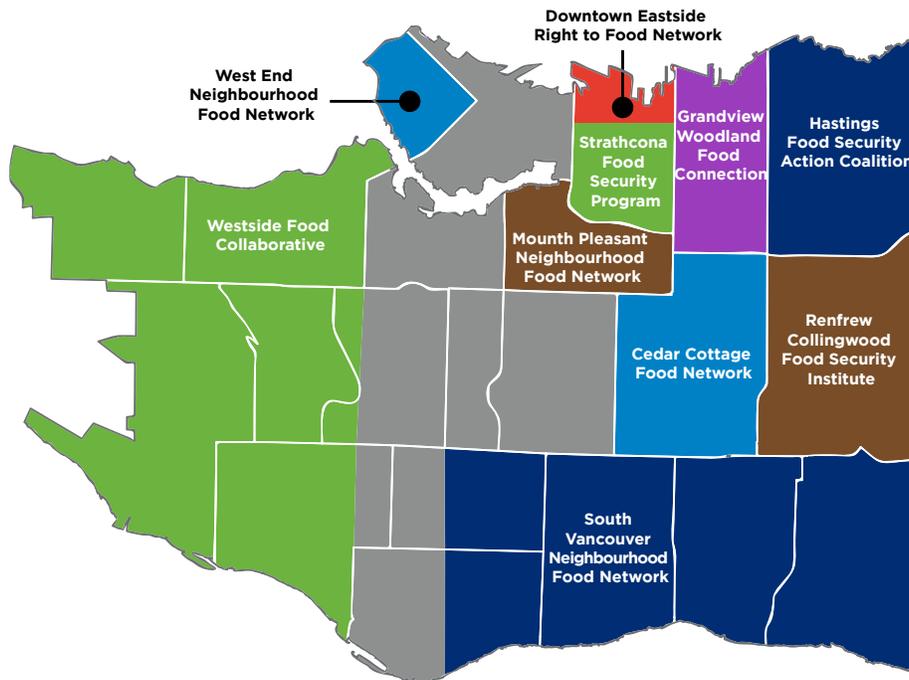
Neighbourhood food networks (NFNs) are coalitions of citizens, organizations and agencies that work collaboratively in and across Vancouver neighbourhoods to address food system issues with the goal of improving access to healthy, affordable and nutritious food for all.

NFNs are powerful community-based engines that catalyse action, knowledge and skill-building on a range of food system issues. NFNs facilitate community connectedness through food-based programs including

community gardening, healthy eating, multicultural cooking clubs, seniors cooking classes, and reading nutritional labels.

These activities enable learning, sharing, and celebration opportunities connected to food. Just as importantly, NFNs use food programs and projects to promote inclusion, participation and capacity-building in communities.

**Map 5: neighbourhood food networks, 2012**  
(data source: Carr and Fodor, 2012)



Map 5 shows the current number and location of neighbourhood food networks. There are currently eight networks operating across the city. Some networks encompass more than one neighbourhood or local area.

Map 5 shows that there is a reasonably comprehensive coverage of NFNs across the city. However, as with Maps 3 and 4, this does not necessarily mean that all residents have access to participate in NFN programs, or benefit from their initiatives. This will be discussed in the section on Vancouver's food system gaps and vulnerabilities in a later section of the baseline analysis.

## Vancouver’s food system gaps and vulnerabilities

In spite of the strong foundation of food system assets that Vancouver enjoys, there are a number of gaps and vulnerabilities. Across Vancouver’s neighbourhoods, there is considerable variation in socio-economic and demographic conditions. Added to all of these challenges are disturbing socio-economic trends across Canada including a growing income gap, social polarization, child poverty, unaffordable housing, and rising rates of hunger and preventable disease. Table 3 shows just a few of the food system challenges facing Canadians.

These issues, coupled with global vulnerabilities including climate change, dramatic losses of agricultural land, and increasingly distant food supply chains means that bolstering the resilience of Vancouver’s food system is critical.

**Table 3: Food system challenges in Canada**

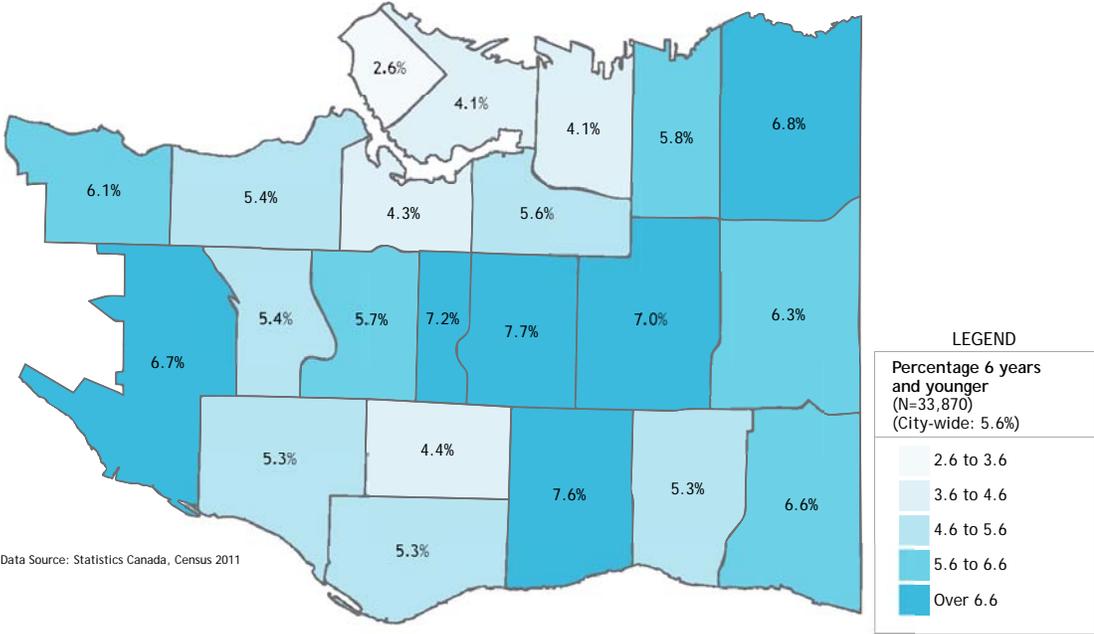
Scope	Challenges
<b>National</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9.2 per cent Canadians report household food insecurity* (Over 1.1 million Canadians) (Health Canada, 2007)</li> </ul>
<b>Provincial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10.4 per cent of British Columbians report household food insecurity* (over 500,000 people) (Health Canada, 2007)</li> <li>• In 2009, B.C. had the highest child poverty rate of any province for eight consecutive years (First Call: B.C. Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, 2011)</li> <li>• 31.8 per cent of Food Bank Users in B.C. were children and youth (Dietitians of Canada, 2012)</li> </ul>
<b>Local</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A family of four on income assistance in Vancouver would require over 100 per cent of their income for shelter and food (Dietitians of Canada, 2012)</li> <li>• Food deserts are associated with high-income regions in British Columbia cities. In B.C. cities, with every \$10,000 increase in neighbourhood income, the likelihood of accessing a large grocery store or fresh food store within one kilometre decreases by 35 per cent (Black et al., 2011)</li> <li>• 5 per cent of people in Vancouver report household food insecurity* (Statistics Canada, 2005)</li> </ul>
<p><i>*The term 'household food insecurity' relates to the financial ability to access adequate healthy and culturally appropriate food, which is connected with household income-level. (Health Canada, 2007)</i></p>	

# Vancouver's food system vulnerabilities

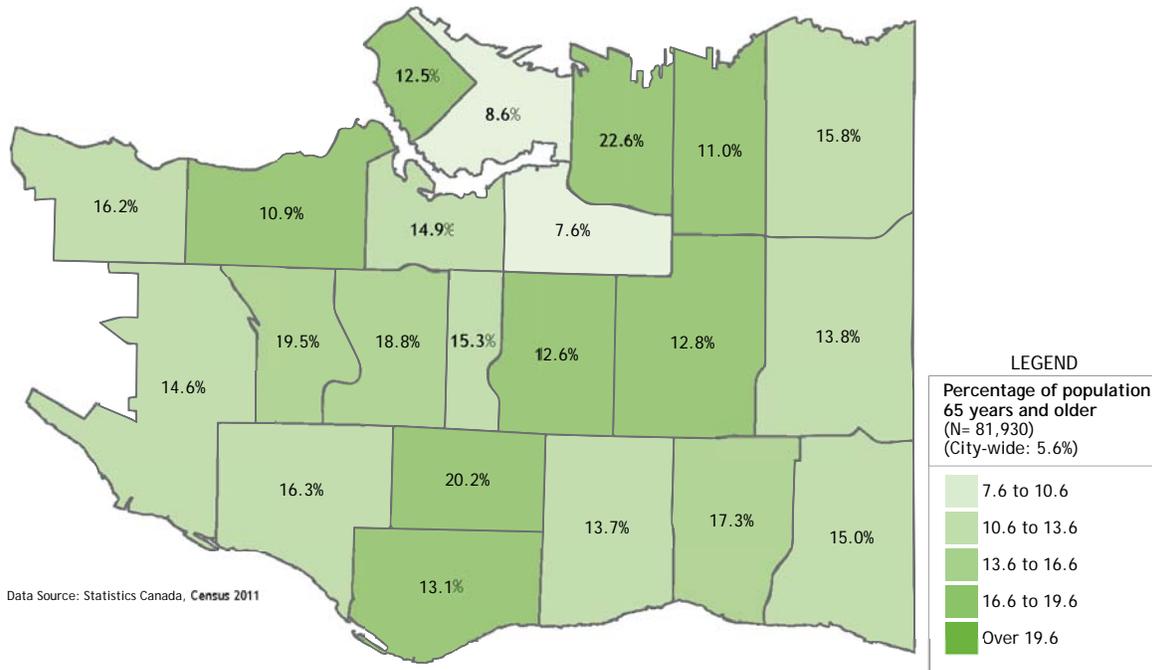
As discussed earlier, Vancouver neighbourhoods are impacted differently by food system vulnerability depending on a number of factors. Although a just and sustainable food system is important for all Vancouverites, the following series of maps provide data on indicators and populations groups commonly associated with household food insecurity. Although far from a complete set of indicators, the following helps enrich our understanding of different interventions that may be needed to address the unique contexts of Vancouver neighbourhoods. The next series of maps provides information on the location of:

- children
- seniors
- recent immigrants
- persons living on low income
- unemployed persons
- lone parent families

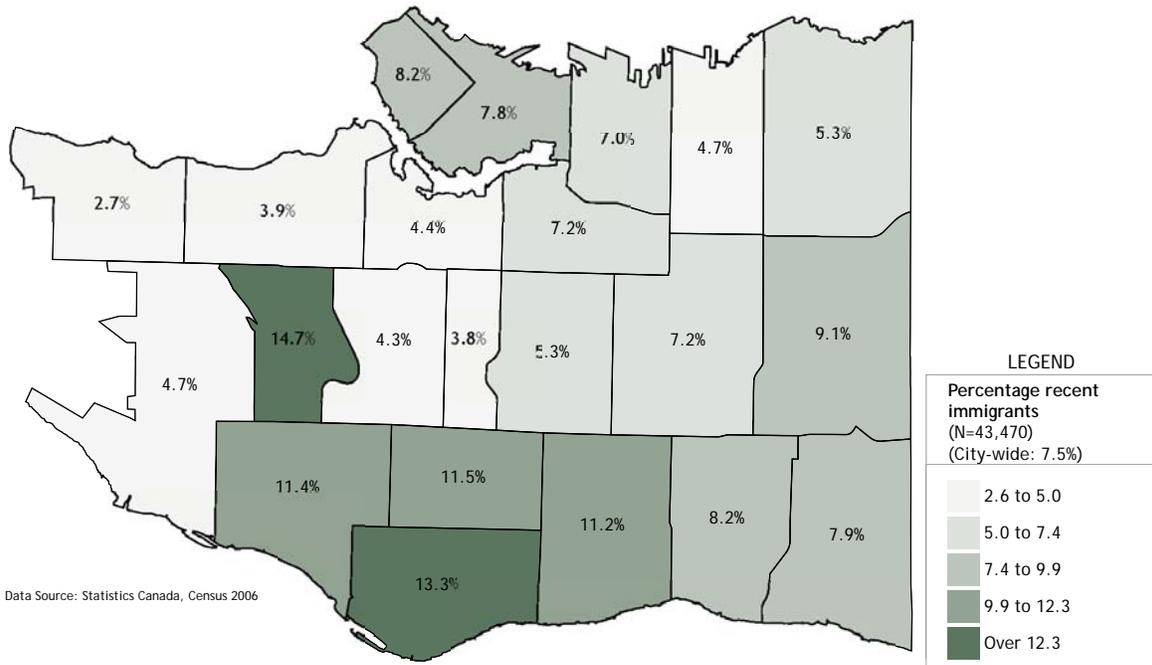
**Map 6: Percentage of population 6 years and younger, 2011 by local area**



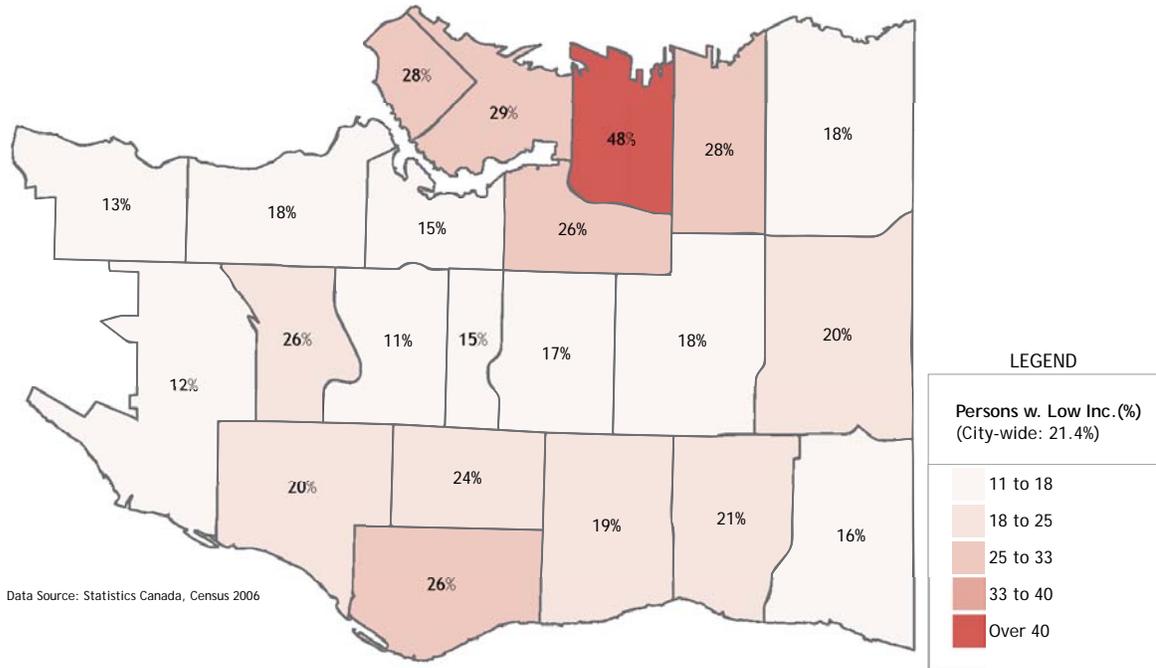
**Map 7: Percentage of population 65 years and over, 2011 by local area**



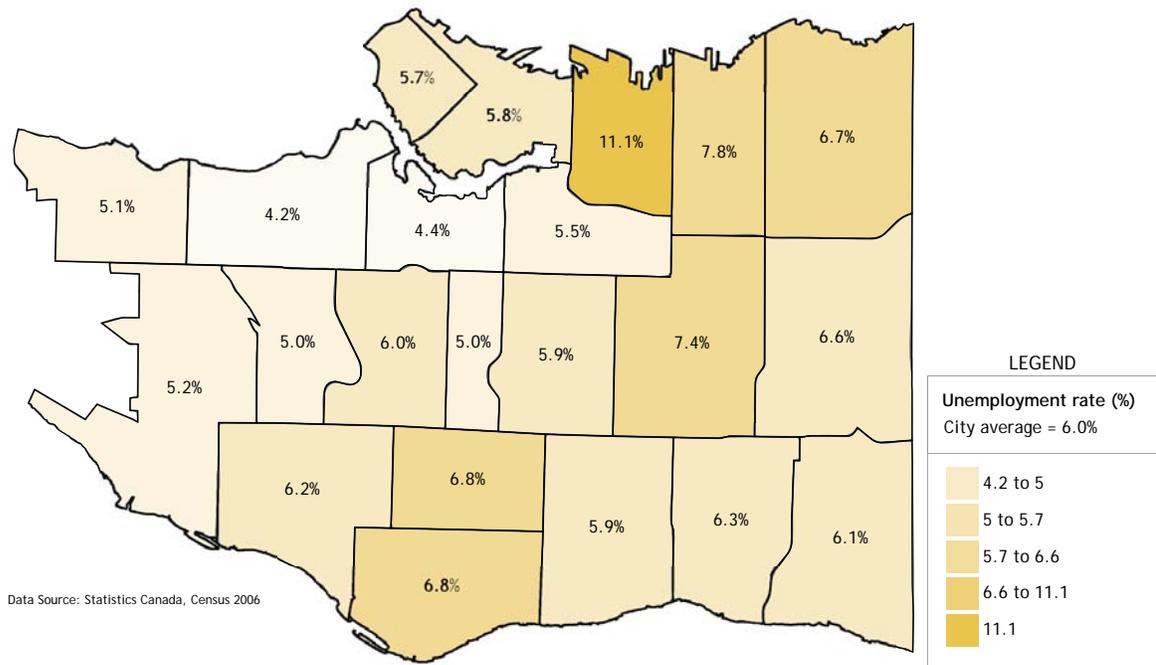
**Map 8: Recent immigrants (arrival within 5 years) as a percentage of total population, 2006 by local area**



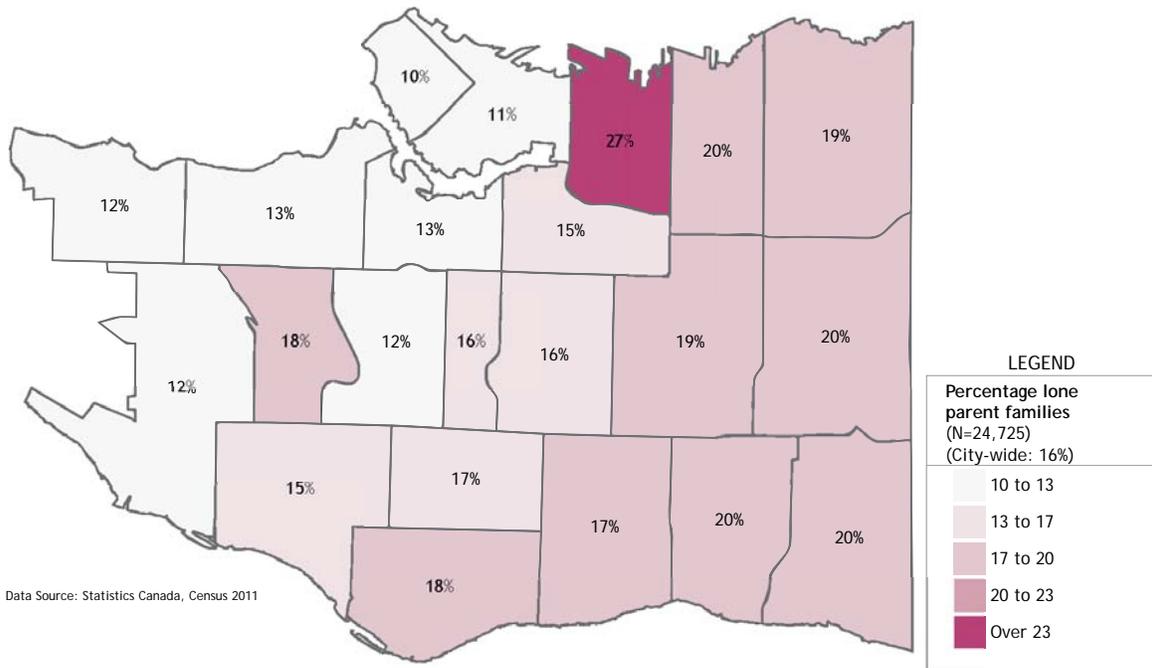
**Map 9: Persons in private households with low income after tax as a percentage of population, 2006 by local area**



**Map 10: Unemployment rate, 2006 by local area**



**Map 11: Percentage of Census families that are lone-parent families, 2011 by local area**



Maps 6-11 demonstrate the need to take a holistic approach to analysing neighbourhood-based actions to improve the resilience of the food system. As Maps 3 and 4 indicated, although Vancouver’s food assets may be most concentrated where the most people live (areas of highest density), this does not necessarily mean that the needs of our most vulnerable population groups are being met, or that we have sufficient food assets of all types to achieve our food system goals. The purpose of the Vancouver Food Strategy is not to take a one-size-fits-all neighbourhoods approach to the food system. Rather, the aim is to balance overall food system goals with the need to acknowledge and respond to the diversity of neighbourhood context.

### Food systems as a catalyst

The importance of creating a coordinated food strategy for Vancouver is not only in response to vulnerabilities and challenges, but equally in response to the recognition of what food brings to the city. Food is an issue that galvanizes communities and catalyzes action like few other topics can. It greens the environment, promotes biodiversity, contributes to the local economy and provides countless opportunities for education, social inclusion and community-building. For all of these reasons, the time for Vancouver’s food strategy is now.



Photo: Laura MacDonald

# Neighbourhood food system snapshots

To illustrate the diversity of needs across the city, and the uniqueness of neighbourhoods, food system snapshots of three Vancouver neighbourhoods have been compiled.

## Vancouver's Westside

Although the Westside is considered one of Vancouver's wealthiest neighbourhoods, west side residents report a number of barriers to food access:

- Prevalence of low income ranges from 11.7 per cent in Dunbar to 23.3 per cent in Arbutus Ridge. Westside populations particularly vulnerable to low-income include seniors, residents living in basement suites, single-parent and young families (Pottery and Jinkerson, 2007)
- Mobility challenges: Despite dense commercial areas along 4th and Broadway Avenues, much of the Westside is residential and as a result, accessing food retailers often requires car use. Walking, using transit and carrying groceries are barriers for seniors and others with mobility issues. Another reported challenge faced by wheelchair and motorized scooter users, is the narrow aisles of small grocery stores (Pottery and Jinkerson, 2007)
- Don't seek help: Social stigma surrounding income-related food security in this neighbourhood inhibits food insecure residents from accessing charitable food providers (Pottery and Jinkerson, 2007)
- There are 12 charitable food providers on Vancouver's west side (Kitsilano Neighbourhood House, 2010)

## Grandview Woodland

- Grandview Woodland has a dense food retail environment along major bus routes, which range from boutique fine foods to relatively inexpensive fresh produce. This includes corner stores, produce stores, grocery stores. Free or affordable food is available at 28 organizations (GWFC, 2006).
- Food insecurity is experienced by 22 per cent of residents. (Masse et al., 2007).
- 13 organizations offer education programs in nutrition, food preparation, production, or budgeting (GWFC, 2006)
- 3,400 people participate in programs of Grandview Woodland's neighbourhood food network (GWFC, 2012).

## Downtown Eastside (DTES)

- According to the Kitchen Tables Project, two-thirds (12,000) of the DTES 18,000 residents are food insecure (Kitchen Tables, 2012).
- 15 Community Kitchens. Community kitchens are groups that cook together and often include education about nutrition, food preparation, and budgeting. (DTES Kitchen Tables, 2010)
- Quest, one of the food redistribution centres in the DTES, recovered \$8.26 million worth of food in 2007 (Thomas, 2008)



Photo: Thien Phan

# Vision and principles

The creation of Vancouver's Food Strategy began with a head start because a vision and principles for a just and sustainable food system were approved in the Vancouver Food Charter, which the Vancouver City Council unanimously adopted in February 2007. An important step forward on the path to a just and sustainable food system for the city and its residents, the Charter promotes education, celebration, and projects for a healthy economy, a healthy ecology, and a healthy society.

The Vancouver Food Charter presents a vision for a food system which benefits the city and the environment. It sets out the City of Vancouver's commitment to the development of a coordinated municipal food policy, and animates residents' engagement and participation in conversations and actions related to food security in Vancouver.

During the food strategy's consultation process, the Vancouver Food Charter vision and principles were re-visited for their continued relevance. Feedback gathered from events and roundtables suggests that the vision and principles are still relevant.

The vision and principles for Vancouver's food system as embodied in the Vancouver Food Charter are set out below.

## Vision

The City of Vancouver is committed to a just and sustainable food system that:

- contributes to the economic, ecological, and social well-being of our city and region
- encourages personal, business and government food practices that foster local production and protect our natural and human resources
- recognizes access to safe, sufficient, culturally appropriate and nutritious food as a basic human right for all Vancouver residents
- reflects the dialogue between the community, government, and all sectors of the food system, and
- celebrates Vancouver's multicultural food traditions.

In a food-secure community, the growing, processing and distribution of healthy, safe food is economically viable, socially just, environmentally sustainable and regionally based. Some members of our community, particularly children, do not have reliable access to safe and nutritious food. In addition, much of the food we eat travels long distances from where it is grown and processed

and is dependent on fossil fuels at every stage. Dependency on importing our food increases our impact on the environment and our vulnerability to food shortages from natural disasters or economic set-backs. Overall food security is increasingly influenced by global factors that affect our community's ability to meet our food system goals.

Community food security needs the involvement of all members of our community, including citizens, consumers, businesses and governments. When citizens are engaged in dialogue and action around food security, and governments are responsive to their communities' concerns and recommendations, sound food policy can be developed and implemented in all sectors of the food system and the community.

In 2002, the City of Vancouver adopted sustainability as a fundamental approach for all the City's operations. The goal of a just and sustainable food system plays a significant role in achieving a Sustainable Vancouver.

## Principles

To create a just and sustainable food system, we in Vancouver can:

- be leaders in municipal and regional food-related policies and programs
- support regional farmers and food producers
- expand urban agriculture and food recovery opportunities
- promote composting and the preservation of healthy soil
- encourage humane treatment of animals raised for food
- support sustainable agriculture and preserve farm land resources
- improve access to healthy and affordable foods
- increase the health of all members of our city
- talk together and teach each other about food
- celebrate our city's diverse food cultures



Photo: Michael Joseph Ogaz

Five principles guide our food system:

## 1. Community economic development

Locally-based food systems enhance Vancouver's economy. Greater reliance on local food systems strengthens our local and regional economies, creates employment, and increases food security.

## 2. Ecological health

A whole-system approach to food protects our natural resources, reduces and redirects food waste, and contributes to the environmental stability and well-being of our local, regional, and global communities.

## 3. Social justice

Food is a basic human right. All residents need accessible, affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate food. Children in particular require adequate amounts of nutritious food for normal growth and learning.

## 4. Collaboration and participation

Sustainable food systems encourage civic engagement, promote responsibility, and strengthen communities. Community food security improves when local government collaborates with community groups, businesses, and other levels of government on sound food system planning, policies and practices.

## 5. Celebration

Sharing food is a fundamental human experience. Food brings people together in celebrations of community and diversity.

The next section of the food strategy uses the Vancouver Food Charter principles and emerging priorities as a springboard to set the stage for a series of food system goals that will guide decision-making, while also providing accessible user friendly ways of expressing the future of Vancouver's food system.



Photo: Thien Phan

# Goals

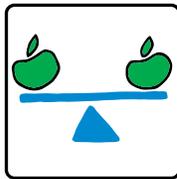
Vancouver's food strategy goals express how we want our food system to take shape in the future. The five goals are:



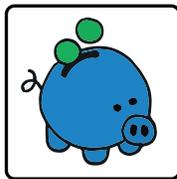
**Goal #1** Support food friendly neighbourhoods



**Goal #2** Empower residents to take action



**Goal #3** Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents



**Goal #4** Make food a centrepiece of Vancouver's green economy



**Goal #5** Advocate for a just and sustainable food system with partners and at all levels of government

The goals are distilled from community consultations, Greenest City Action Plan (GCAP) local food goals, principles identified in the Vancouver Food Charter, and research on food strategies in other cities. Each goal:

- is represented by a symbol and a brief description.
- has a hand-drawn illustration depicting the main ideas behind the goal. These are intended to encourage Vancouver residents to imagine themselves and their communities in Vancouver's collective food future. The illustrations also serve as a way to engage those whose first language is not English.
- reflects the main spatial scale(s) at which action will be focused, that is neighbourhoods, city-wide, or beyond.



## Goal #1 Support food friendly neighbourhoods



### Action focus

- Neighbourhood

### Characteristics of Goal #1

- Strengthens physical food assets and infrastructure to create resilient neighbourhood food systems.
- Refers primarily to food assets and infrastructure. This includes infrastructure that can be built, retro-fitted or re-purposed to support local food systems, such as community or collective gardens, community fruit tree orchards, community kitchens, farmers markets, community food markets, food storage facilities, community composting facilities, healthy corner stores or other ways to improve access to fresh, healthy food).
- Also considers the unique context of each neighbourhood and the ability to scale up food assets to multiple neighbourhoods and city-wide.



## Goal #2 Empower residents to take action

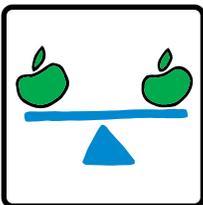


### Action focus

- Neighbourhood

### Characteristics of Goal #2

- Strengthens participation and knowledge of residents towards belonging and inclusion in the city.
- Refers to enhancing human capital and community capacity to ensure broad participation in identifying food system challenges in neighbourhoods, including the capacity to propose and implement solutions to those challenges.
- Emphasizes community development, including increasing the availability of knowledge, the ability to access community-based food programs, organizations such as Neighbourhood food networks, activities of the Vancouver Food Policy Council, and other organizations with food-related focus and initiatives.
- Improves information that is easily accessible and available in multiple languages and formats to empower residents. This could include a directory of local food initiatives and organizations, or information about City policies and regulations.



## Goal #3

Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents



### Action focus

- Neighbourhood
- City-wide

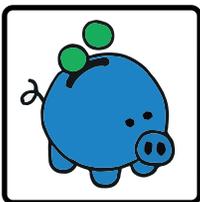
### Characteristics of Goal #3

- Associated with what we might commonly think of as “food security”. Although there are dozens of definitions of food security, one of the most common definitions is from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO): “... a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” (2001).
- Building on this definition, the goal includes physical health and nutrition, but recognizes the importance of creating communities and neighbourhoods that facilitate access to basic goods, are socially inclusive, designed to enhance physical and mental well-being, and protect the natural ecology.

- Improves access to food for all residents, with particular attention to increasing food access for vulnerable populations to access healthy, affordable, culturally diverse and sustainably grown food within a reasonable walking, transit or cycling distance.
- Recognizes the need for healthy and affordable food options in neighbourhoods as important dimensions of health and equity. This means increasing food retail options to improve access to healthier, fresher food options for all residents. These can include community food markets, mobile healthy food vending or healthy corner stores.



Photo: Thien Phan



## Goal #4 Make food a centrepiece of Vancouver's green economy



### Action focus

- City-wide
- Region

### Characteristics of Goal #4

- Supports the creation of food-related green jobs, and addressing gaps in infrastructure to grow, process, warehouse and distribute local and sustainable foods. It includes facilitating the creation of innovative food infrastructure that may include a food business incubator or central food hub.
- Aims to localize the food supply chain by facilitating direct marketing opportunities that link BC producers with urban consumers, such as farmers markets, community food markets, street food vendors, urban farmers, Good Food box Programs. This minimizes environmental impacts by reducing food travel distances and supports local economic development.
- Emphasizes skill-building and job creation opportunities in the food sector that support emerging green sectors and technologies, and adds value to traditional economic sectors.
- Supports social enterprise models of food businesses that contribute to the local green economy while also building skills and resilience among those involved.



## Goal #5 Advocate for a just and sustainable food system with partners and at all levels of government



### Action focus

- Regions
- Province
- Beyond

### Characteristics of Goal #5

- Recognizes that food systems exist at many scales, from household to neighbourhood, to city, to region and beyond. Working towards a just and sustainable food system means using the tools and levers available at the municipal level, while understanding what is outside the ability of local government to influence.
- Speaks to the importance of ensuring that the City plays a strong advocacy role in promoting food issues at regional, provincial and national levels by placing a food system lens on plans and policies at all levels of government, such as health, nutrition, education, housing, etc., and with other key partners including foundations, private institutions and other stakeholders.
- Strengthens partnerships, including leveraging funds to ensure that residents and governments collaborate together toward food system goals.
- Supports policies to enhance the capacity of regional and provincial governments to adapt to climate change impacts, protecting productive BC farmland, or supporting BC farmers.

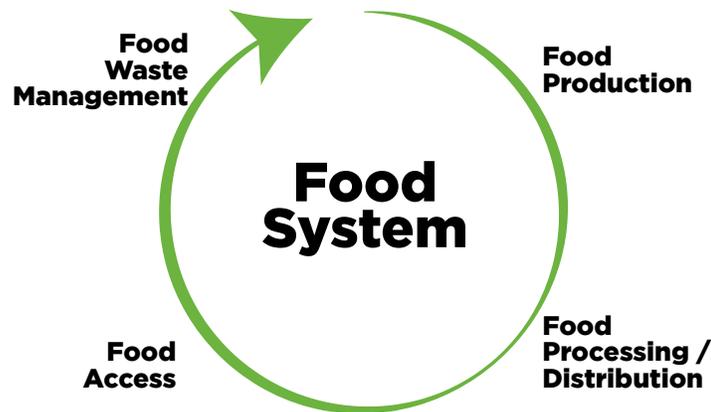


Photo: Thien Phan

# Actions

**T**his component of the Vancouver Food Strategy outlines the actions or ingredients that will be needed to achieve the vision, principles and goals set out for Vancouver’s food system. Ingredients can include creation of new policies and regulations, or amendments to existing ones. Ingredients can also include pilot projects, community engagement exercises, education programs or food system toolkits for various stakeholders.

Partnerships are an essential aspect of achieving the actions. To make the biggest impact on food system issues, a coordinated approach is needed that makes the most of the tools and levers available to the City, while at the same time partnering with other levels of government, School Board, funders, community groups, businesses and others. The actions are organized according to parts of the food system.



Each area of the food system has a number of action areas associated with it. Each action area represents a current or emerging policy, guideline or program where the City of Vancouver is directly involved.

Action areas are organized as follows:

- Definition
- How the action contributes to creating a just and sustainable food system
- Current Vancouver context

- Specific actions and timeline:
  - Short-term: less than 3 years
  - Mid-term: 3-5 years
  - Long-term: more than 5 years
- In keeping with the aim of taking an integrated approach to the food system, each action area ends by showing which food strategy goals it contributes to achieving. This is done using the symbols associated with each of the five goals.
- In keeping with the goal of showing alignment with broader City priorities, a cross-over benefits table is included as an appendix.

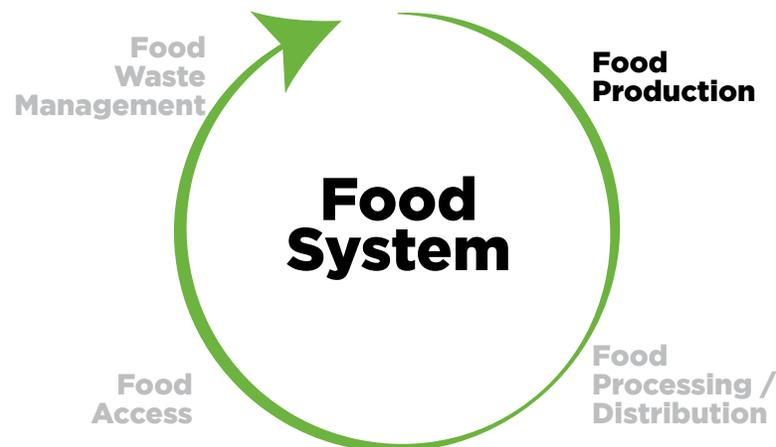


Photo: Thien Phan

# Food production (urban agriculture)

## What is urban agriculture?

The City of Vancouver understands urban agriculture as the production and harvesting of fruits and vegetables, raising of animals, or cultivation of fish for local consumption or sale within and around cities.



## Why urban agriculture matters

Urban agriculture benefits the environment, the economy and social well-being of citizens because it plays an important role in creating vibrant gathering places, greening the environment, supporting the local food economy, and promoting social inclusion.

## Urban agriculture action areas

In relation to the aim of creating a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver, the main urban agriculture action areas are:

- community gardening (including fruit trees)
- urban farming
- hobby beekeeping
- backyard hens
- edible landscaping



Photo: Thien Phan



Elisabeth and Peter's Garden

The greatest gift of the garden is the restoration of the five...

# Community gardens

## What is a community garden?

A community garden is a single piece of land gardened collectively by a group of people.

The City of Vancouver understands community garden as land managed by a non-profit society or a group of individuals, and used to grow plants and harvest food or ornamental crops. Crops can be used by those cultivating the land and their households, or be donated for use in the programs of partner non-profit organizations such as community centres, Neighbourhood Houses or neighbourhood food networks.

With required approvals, community gardens may exist in any area of the City. However, residential boulevard gardens, Green Streets gardens and beautification projects are not considered to be community gardens.

Programs run in conjunction with community gardens may incorporate City-approved economic development or social enterprise training opportunities. However, land used for the primary purpose of growing food commercially is not considered to be a community garden, and is therefore subject to a different definition and set of regulatory requirements (see urban farming).

## Why community gardens matter

Community gardens serve as important community gathering places where gardeners and non-gardeners alike can enjoy green spaces to grow food, have a picnic or participate in garden activities. Community gardens contribute to neighbourhood vitality through programming partnerships with Neighbourhood Houses, community centres and other community-based organizations. This includes community kitchens, and nutrition programs. Community gardens are also powerful sites to promote inter-cultural and inter-generational learning, along with other social inclusion and community development goals.

## City of Vancouver context

Vancouver has 97 community gardens with a total of approximately 3,900 garden plots. This includes gardens located on City, Parks, and private lands, including churches and other institutions. The gardens vary in scope and size, from only a few plots to gardens with over 100 plots.

Each community garden is managed by a non-profit society made up of local residents who are members of the garden. All community gardens have a local coordinator who oversees the governance and management of their respective garden. Most community gardens are organized according to an individual allotment model where each gardener takes responsibility for a plot while participating in joint garden responsibilities and in some cases, garden programs such as community kitchen cooking programs or environmental education programs. Other gardens are organized and managed on a collective model where there is no individual ownership of garden plots.

Regardless of the governance model, community gardens are recognized by the City of Vancouver as much more than land alone. Rather, community gardens are treated as powerful community food assets and gathering places that promote sustainability, neighbourhood livability, urban greening, community building, intergenerational activity, social interaction, crime reduction, exercise and food production. The City strongly encourages community garden members to include the following into their garden activities:

- a community development program which encourages the involvement of local schools, youth groups, senior citizens, ethno-cultural groups and others who may not have an assigned plot but may wish to participate in garden activities;
- an environmental enrichment program which offers demonstration activities to encourage urban agriculture outside of community gardens;
- mechanisms to promote urban greening and environmental biodiversity;
- activities to ensure that garden membership and participation reflects the diversity of the community in which the garden is located, and the city at large.

Community gardens must go through an approval process that includes an expression of interest, selection process, and lease agreement.

## Examples of best practices

### Community collaborations and systems approach to urban agriculture

The **Britannia Urban Garden Project (BUG)** is a partnership between the Grandview Woodland Food Connection, Britannia Community Centre, Britannia School, and the wider community. BUG aims to develop new food gardens, composting, fruit trees, beekeeping program and a greenhouse. The project goals include 1) building student and community skills and food awareness that will help reconnect participants to the land and food they eat, support healthy food choices and foster leadership development in the area of urban agriculture, 2) improving student's awareness of environmental and health issues as it pertains to growing food locally, and 3) fostering stronger networks, partnerships, and linkages between Britannia School, the community centre and the wider community.

### Inter-cultural understanding and education

Established in 2007, **World in a Garden** is a culturally-diverse urban agriculture project that educates community and youth on the nutritional, cultural, social and environmental benefits of a just and local food system. The project teaches participants about the seed-to-table process and promotes cross-cultural awareness. In addition, food is donated to the food bank and local food programs to increase access to fresh, healthy food with partners.



Photo: Thien Phan

## Community garden actions

Action #	Action	Timeline
1.1	Explore opportunities to improve security of tenure for community gardens and community orchards on city property.	Short-term - Priority
1.2	Improve accessibility and clarity of application processes for creating or participating in community gardens and community orchards, particularly for under-represented ethno-cultural communities.	Short-term - Priority
1.3	Encourage community garden models which promote community development opportunities with local schools, Neighbourhood Houses, and other local organizations as part of their education programming.	Short-term - Priority
1.4	Create healthy soil guidelines for community gardens informed by environmental best practices.	Short-term - Priority
1.5	Enhance funding partnerships to support the creation, operation, improvement and capacity building opportunities for community gardens and community orchards.	Short-term
1.6	Facilitate the creation of an Association of Community Garden Coordinators to assist in capacity building, information sharing and overall garden development across the city.	Short-term
1.7	Update existing, and develop new land use policies, zoning, and other regulatory levers, such as Community Amenity Contributions to bolster the creation of community gardens and other forms of urban agriculture.	Mid-term
1.8	Work with the Association of Community Garden Coordinators to implement strategies that will reduce community garden waiting lists and to improve access for ethno-cultural communities.	Mid-term
1.9	Increase the number of community garden plots in Vancouver from 3,640 to 5,000 by the year 2020 (five to six new gardens per year).	Long-term

## *Integration: Making connections between community gardens and food strategy goals*



### *Support food friendly neighbourhoods*

Provides vibrant community gathering spaces. Food grown in community gardens can be used as part of educational programs at Neighbourhood Houses, community centres, childcare centres and other neighbourhood-based agencies.



### *Empower residents to take action*

Belonging to a community garden empowers citizens with knowledge about growing and eating healthy food. Community gardens promote social inclusion and community capacity building.



### *Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents*

Community gardens improve access to local, healthy food and promote healthy eating.

# Urban farming

## What Is urban farming?

Urban farming refers to urban food production for the primary purpose of revenue generation. Urban farming may be operated on a for-profit, not-for-profit or social enterprise model.

In Vancouver, “urban farm” refers to a site where fresh food is grown primarily for sale, or where the food is primarily consumed by someone other than the grower(s). The raising of livestock for sale is not included.

## Why urban farming matters

Urban farming provides many of the same benefits as community gardens: urban farms green the city, improve biodiversity, make use of under-utilized spaces and produce food closer to home. In addition, urban farming enhances the local food economy by creating jobs, building skills, shortening food supply chains, increasing economic prosperity and developing new local green sectors of the economy.

## City of Vancouver context

Cities worldwide, including a growing number in North America, are now creating enabling regulation to support urban farming. Close-to-home examples include Seattle, Victoria and San Francisco. In 2010, there were approximately 24 urban farms operating in Metro Vancouver, and in 2011 that number grew to approximately 28 farms, 17 of which are in Vancouver. Typically, urban farms have the following characteristics:

- they use organic and sustainable practices
- they use spatially and temporally intensive growing methods
- they farm multiple sites
- they are often collaborative in nature – between individuals, farms, and organizations
- they are often electronically documented via website, blog or other social media tools

Many urban farms in Vancouver utilize residential yard space. Other urban farmers are using:

- brownfield sites, developing models that allow them to grow food safely on otherwise potentially toxic land
- school yards, which provide opportunities for food growing and educating children and teachers



Photo: Naseem Ahmadi

- rooftops, where the sun shines just that little bit stronger; and on public land, where they contribute to the landscape and the public good.

The regulatory context for urban farming in Vancouver is currently being reviewed. Although there is strong support for urban farming, a number of policy, licensing, and regulatory barriers still require clarification. Specifically, while it is legal to grow food in Vancouver, there are limits where certain land uses, licensing and commercial activities are concerned.

## Examples of best practices

Vancouver's urban farmers are engaged in a number of creative approaches to their respective businesses that often incorporate complementary social and environmental goals.

- **SOLEfood Farm:** Use of raised beds and vertical farming in several lots near the Downtown Eastside
- **My Urban Farm:** Use of imported soil in microgreens production and bicycle-powered delivery
- **Farmers on 57th:** Converted one acre of lawn at George Pearson Centre into an urban farm while offering programs to the Centre's residents
- **Fresh Roots Urban Farm:** Partnerships with Vancouver School Board
- **Other farms:** Utilizing dozens of residential yards throughout Vancouver for food production

## Innovations and work underway

The Vancouver Urban Farming Society began farming in 2010. The Society initially defined itself as an informal group of urban farmers, urban farming supporters, and food security advocates dedicated to increasing the sustainability of urban farming in Vancouver and throughout B.C. The Urban Farming Society has engaged in a number of activities over the last two years to advance urban farming in Vancouver. Activities include convening a number of gatherings to discuss the opportunities and challenges involved with farming in the City. In 2011, they hosted Vancouver's first Urban Farming Forum which helped inform the recommendations in the Vancouver Food Strategy. In addition, Vancouver's urban farmers are:

- researching urban farming land use policy precedents in other Canadian and American cities
- administering an urban farming census which includes land use data

- attending Food Policy Council meetings, local food events, and City-sponsored Greenest City Action Plan events to engage and connect with other parts of the food system, and
- developing best practices to ensure appropriate and responsible land use
- in April 2012, the Vancouver Urban Farming Society incorporated as a non-profit Society under the B.C. Society Act.
- the City of Vancouver provided funding to support the Urban Farming Forum in November 2011.

### *Urban farming actions*

Action #	Action	Timeline
<b>1.10</b>	Create policy to enable commercial food production (urban farming) as a defined use on zoned lands with appropriate limitations and mitigation strategies.	Short-term - Priority
<b>1.11</b>	Explore possibilities for urban farmers to sell produce directly from an urban farm (farm gate sales) with appropriate limitations and mitigation strategies.	Short-term - Priority
<b>1.12</b>	Enable alternative food retail and distribution models for urban farming produce such as community food markets, food distribution hubs and pre-approved Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) distribution sites in locations such as community centres, neighbourhood houses and schools.	Short-term - Priority
<b>1.13</b>	Create urban farming business license category.	Short-term - Priority
<b>1.14</b>	Create healthy soil guidelines for urban farms informed by environmental best practices.	Short-term - Priority
<b>1.15</b>	Create a baseline of existing models of urban farms, monitor changes, and integrate new models as they emerge.	Short-term - Priority
<b>1.16</b>	Increase the number of urban farms in Vancouver from 17 to 35 by the year 2020, ranging from backyard farms to mid-scale operations.	Long-term

## *Integration: Making connections between urban farming and food strategy goals*



### *Support food friendly neighbourhoods*

Food grown in urban farms can be purchased by Neighbourhood Houses, community centres, childcare centres and other neighbourhood-based agencies for use in cafeterias, community kitchens or other community-based programs.



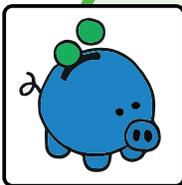
### *Empower residents to take action*

Belonging to a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program or having access to food grown in local urban farms helps citizens make more informed purchasing decisions, and can increase knowledge about the importance of growing and eating healthy food.



### *Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents*

Urban farming improves access to local, healthy food and promotes healthy eating.



### *Make food a centrepiece of Vancouver's green economy*

Urban farming contributes to the local food economy, creates jobs, builds skills and supports other green economic sectors (e.g. small-scale food processing, human-powered delivery services).

# Edible landscaping

## What Is edible landscaping?

The City of Vancouver understands edible landscaping as the practice of using food-bearing plants for landscaping purposes in place of more commonly used ornamental plants.

## Why edible landscaping matters

Edible landscaping can offer a complement to related urban agriculture and food system goals. Incorporating edible plants such as fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, vegetables, herbs and edible flowers into urban landscapes maintains aesthetic values, while also providing many other benefits including:

- **Urban greening:** Using edible plants to replace common ornamental plants or to fill unplanted areas enhances biodiversity. Many edible plants are native and part of local ecosystems. They are adapted to the local climate and provide habitat for urban wildlife.
- **Education:** The use of food plants in the landscape has the potential to connect people with where their food comes from and how it grows.
- **Culture:** There are many food plants that have important uses in different cultures. Edible landscaping provides the opportunity to grow plants that can play a role in inter-cultural exchange and education.
- **Recreation and community-building:** Edible plants can provide people with the opportunity to interact with the landscape by engaging them in growing, harvesting, and eating edible plants. Such interactions can foster a sense of landscape stewardship among people.

## City of Vancouver context

The City of Vancouver currently uses the Urban Agriculture Design Guidelines for the Private Realm as a tool to promote edible landscaping in new developments. The City offers tools and resources to assist City departments and external partners in making appropriate choices of planting material to achieve edible landscaping goals. The 2010 Edible Landscaping White Paper assessed the current status of edible landscaping in Vancouver, and provided recommendations for further enhancing the practice.

In 2012, the Blooming Boulevard Guidelines expanded to include edible plants along boulevards and traffic circle plantings.



Photo: Joanna Clark

## Edible landscaping actions

Action #	Action	Timeline
1.17	Encourage implementation of Green Streets and Blooming Boulevards program guidelines to allow for growing vegetables and other food plants in residential boulevards, traffic circles and bulges.	Short-term
1.18	Promote edible landscaping as an alternative to ornamental or flowering plants in residential, commercial, institutional and parks landscaping plans.	Mid-term
1.19	Increase the planting of food-bearing trees when planting new trees in parks and on other civic lands, and encourage community stewardship of those trees.	Mid-term

### Integration: Making connections between edible landscaping and food strategy goals



#### Support food friendly neighbourhoods

Edible landscaping greens urban spaces, increases biodiversity and provides opportunities for communities to learn about native food-bearing plants in their neighbourhoods. Food grown in edible landscaping installations can be used as part of educational programs at Neighbourhood Houses, community centres, childcare centres and other neighbourhood-based agencies.



#### Empower residents to take action

Edible landscapes can be stewarded in the same way as community gardens – as sites where groups of community members are empowered to plant, tend and harvest. Similar to community gardens, this community-driven model can promote social inclusion and community capacity-building.

## Hobby beekeeping

### What Is hobby beekeeping?

The City of Vancouver understands “hobby beekeeping” as the keeping of honey bees in the city as a hobby for the purposes of:

- cultivating honey, beeswax, pollen, royal jelly or other products
- for pollination of fruits and vegetables
- for educational purposes, or
- as a small-business.

### Why hobby beekeeping matters

Hobby beekeeping increases biodiversity, pollination and better harvests for plants in backyard, community and public gardens, urban farms, and edible landscapes.

### City of Vancouver context

In 2005, the City of Vancouver adopted guidelines for hobby beekeeping, developed in collaboration with the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (BCMAL). City staff, Provincial apicultural staff, Vancouver Coastal Health and local beekeepers discussed a variety of options for permitting beekeeping and supports the use of guidelines rather than more formal methods.

The guidelines stipulate that it is the responsibility of the person on whose property the bees are kept to provide adequate water for the bees to prevent bees from seeking water in neighbouring swimming pools, birdbaths, ponds or other community bodies of water. Hobby beekeeping in Vancouver is currently limited to:

- One- and Two-Family Dwelling Districts (RS- and RT-); or
- Agricultural Districts (RA-1) on sites containing a one- or two-family dwelling; or
- A site containing a community garden; or
- A site where beekeeping will form part of an educational program.

A maximum of two (2) beehives per lot in One- and Two-Family Dwelling Districts (RS- and RT-) on a parcel of land less than 10,000 square feet. A maximum of four (4) beehives per lot on a parcel of land with an area over 10,000 square feet. Beehives are restricted to rear yards. In order to ensure the appropriate height of honeybee flight path:

- a beehive will be situated 8 feet or more above ground level; or
- the beehive entrance will be directed away from the neighbouring property and situated behind a solid fence or hedge that is 6 feet in height running parallel to the property line; or
- a beehive will be located a minimum of 25 feet away from the neighbouring property line.

## Examples of best practices

In 2010, the City of Vancouver issued an expression of interest for a volunteer beekeeper to tend **honeybee hives on the roof of City Hall**. The winning applicant currently tends two City Hall beehives. The bees enjoy proximity to the City Hall community garden where they forage for pollen. In 2011, the hives yielded approximately 90 kilograms of honey.

The Provincial Bee Act requires anyone who operates honeybee colonies to be registered with the BCMAL. The location of the apiary must also be registered. If a person is contravening this registration process, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands apicultural staff have the authority to destroy or dispose of the honeybees or beehive equipment in the possession of the unregistered individual. The Provincial Bee Act enables BCMAL to respond to complaints, conduct inspections and to control diseases that affect bees.

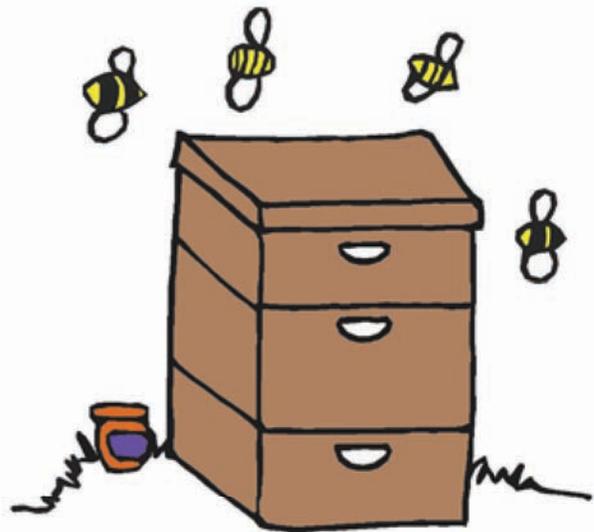


As of November, 2012, there were 121 apiaries in Vancouver.

Beekeeping provides an opportunity to educate about the food system and a number of community organizations offer information sessions on how to start beekeeping. These sessions reflect increased interest on the part of residents to learn more about the environment, pollinators and the food system.

### *Hobby beekeeping actions*

Action #	Action	Timeline
1.20	Review and update existing guidelines to consider conditions under which beekeeping on rooftops, institutions and higher density locations could be permissible.	Mid-term
1.21	Explore options to allow sale of honey directly from an urban farm (farm gate sales) with appropriate limitations and mitigation strategies.	Mid-term
1.22	Support public education programs on pollinator bees, honeybees and beekeeping in response to community demand and interest.	Mid-term



## *Integration: making connections between hobby beekeeping and food strategy goals*



### *Support food friendly neighbourhoods*

Local honey produced by Vancouver beekeepers can be purchased by Neighbourhood Houses, community centres, childcare centres and other neighbourhood-based agencies for use in cafeterias, community kitchens or other community-based programs.



### *Empower residents to take action*

Workshops about hobby beekeeping can form part of community-based programming and education, contribute to teaching citizens hands-on skills and promote the importance of pollinators to our local food supply.



### *Make food a centrepiece of Vancouver's green economy*

Urban honey production can be developed as a small business enterprise that contributes to other local food economy activities.

## Backyard hens

### What are backyard hens?

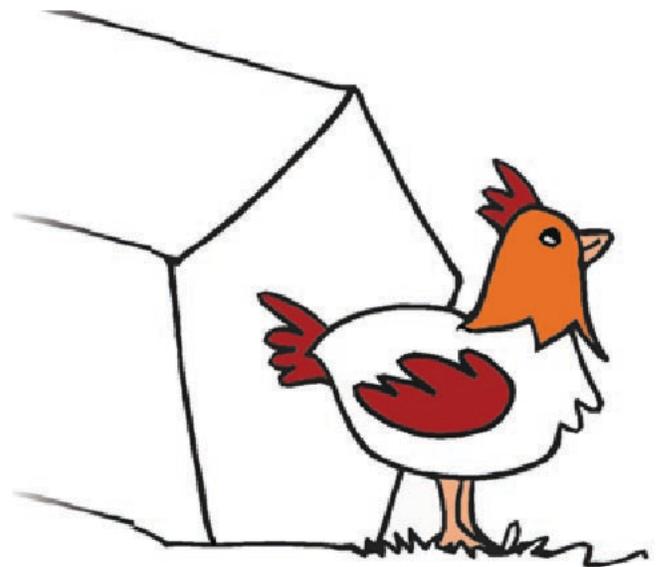
The City of Vancouver defines hen as a domesticated female chicken that is at least four months old. The keeping of backyard hens in Vancouver is permissible in accordance with City of Vancouver guidelines for keeping backyard hens, Section 7.16 of the Animal Control By-law, and Zoning and Development By-law 10065.

### Why backyard hens matter

There are a number of health, environmental and social benefits to keeping backyard hens. From a health perspective, eggs from well-tended backyard hens are healthier and tastier. Environmentally, hen droppings are high in nitrogen so are perfect compost enrichers. Hens provide natural insect control and improve soil by their scratching for bugs. Socially, hens are great conversation starters, often become a great way for neighbours to get to know each other, and provide an opportunity to educate about the food system.

### City of Vancouver context

In 2009, City Council instigated the development of policy guidelines for the keeping of backyard hens in Vancouver. In June 2010, these guidelines were enacted as amendments to the Animal Control By-law and Zoning and Development By-law. The City's backyard hen regulations focus on protecting the health and welfare of residents and ensuring the humane treatment of backyard hens. Owning backyard hens is another way for residents to participate in the local food system. There are currently approximately 90 registered keepers of hens in Vancouver.



## Examples of best practices

A number of community-based organizations provide education, resources and workshops to promote the responsible care of urban hens. For instance, Village Vancouver Transition Society devotes resources to encourage those interested in keeping hens to meet, share knowledge and experience, and help each other out with coop sitting, feed sharing and other issues. In addition, new business enterprises have emerged related to backyard hens. This includes Vancouver's Backyard Bounty Collective, which offers expertise and guidance to aspiring keepers of hens, as well as custom built hen coops that are offered for sale.

### *Backyard hen actions*

Action #	Action	Timeline
1.23	Explore options to allow the sale of the eggs of backyard hens directly from an urban farm (farm gate sales) with appropriate limitations and mitigation strategies.	Mid-term
1.24	Review and update zoning and development by-law to consider conditions and locations for the keeping of backyard hens.	Mid-term
1.25	Support public education programs on backyard hens in response to community demand and interest.	Mid-term

## *Integration: Making connections between backyard hens and food strategy goals*



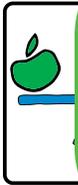
### *Support food friendly neighbourhoods*

Hens are conversation starters, and as such are a great way for neighbours to get know each other.



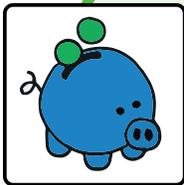
### *Empower residents to take action*

Learning to responsibly tend backyard hens can form part of community-based programming and education programs that teach hands-on skills and also connections between hens and other dimensions of local food.



### *Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents*

Access to local eggs creates more opportunities for choosing healthy food options.



### *Make food a centrepiece of Vancouver's green economy*

The keeping of backyard hens supports the local food economy by fostering new enterprises includes consulting groups that offer expertise and guidance on how to keep hens and businesses that design and sell custom-built coops.



Photo: Ernst Vikne (Creative Commons)



Photo: Thien Phan

# Food processing and distribution

## What is food processing and distribution?

From a food service industry perspective, food processing refers to any deliberate change in a food that occurs before it is available for consumption. Food processing can be as simple as freezing, canning or drying food to preserve nutrients and freshness, or as complex as frozen meal preparation, meat processing, grain milling and other value-adding operations at a variety of scales.



Inseparable from food processing is food distribution which refers to the mechanisms for moving food from producers and processors to sites —such as grocery stores, restaurants, farmers markets, pocket markets or fresh produce stands — where consumers can access it.

## Food processing and distribution in the City of Vancouver

### Food processing

In relation to a sustainable food system, the City of Vancouver understands food processing as facilities, programs or other supports that enable local community groups, social agencies, or entrepreneurs to transform raw ingredients at a small or medium-scale for the purpose of 1) enhancing educational and capacity-building programs that promote healthy, local

and nutritious food, such as community kitchens, canning and preserving workshops or 2) achieving entrepreneurial or social enterprise aims such as food business incubators and commercial kitchens.

### **Food distribution**

The City of Vancouver understands food distribution as the movement of food from the producer or processor to consumers with a focus on 1) improving food storage and movement infrastructure, 2) shortening the distance that food travels, 3) supporting local producers and processors (urban, peri-urban and B.C.-based), and 4) increasing the types and number of locations where local and sustainably-produced or processed food is available.

### Why food processing and distribution matters

The intensely globalized nature of our food supply chains means that it can be difficult to know where our food is produced, the conditions under which it is processed, and how it arrives on our supermarket shelves. A recent resurgence of interest in knowing where our food comes from has resulted in efforts to re-localize food chains.

Among the outcomes are increased consumer demand for local food, and recognition of the need to strengthen food processing and distribution infrastructure in support of more locally based products. Currently there is a missing middle in local food infrastructure in Vancouver that limits the ability of urban farmers, market operators, small-scale food businesses and others to scale up operations to increase impact. Examples of food processing and distribution infrastructure include a central food hub, commercial kitchen space or a food business incubator. These types of infrastructure allow the local food economy to grow and support a low carbon economy by reducing the distance that food travels.

Stronger infrastructure and supports for processing and distributing local and sustainable food provide more opportunities for community groups, institutions and food entrepreneurs to achieve their food business and community development goals. It supports local producers and processors by bringing more local food into the city and moves it more efficiently to retail and community-based locations. Last but not least, it increases opportunities for consumers from all walks of life to access fresh, local, sustainable food in a wider variety of locations.

## Food processing and distribution topics in Vancouver

In relation to the aim of creating a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver, the main food processing and distribution topics are:

- Local food hub
- Food business incubator
- Local and sustainable food purchasing by City facilities
- Community kitchens



Photo: Thien Phan



Photo: Thien Phan

## Local food hub

### What is a local food hub?

The City of Vancouver considers a local food hub to be an aggregation, processing, and distribution hub that aims to increase the amount of local food within the local food economy.

Local food hubs take different shapes and forms. Some serve as regional farmers markets, others operate as community centres with a community development focus, while some operate as a virtual online marketplace. Food hubs potentially support a range of local food functions that may include: a year round farmers market, a chefs market, a commercial kitchen for food entrepreneurs to create value added products, training to build skills of emergent food entrepreneurs by providing education, training and marketing expertise, commissaries for local food vendors to store carts and supplies, and offering commercial/office space. Some, though not all, food hubs perform all of the above functions, depending on supply and demand. What food hubs have in common is the ability to connect local buyers and sellers. In some cases, there is also a focus on creating facilities for farmers to store, process, market and distribute local food.

### Why a local food hub matters

A food hub can fill gaps in local food infrastructure by connecting a spectrum of local food producers, processors and buyers. They have the potential to increase the amount of local food produced and sold in support of the local food economy, reduce waste of locally produced food, foster the growth of small to medium local businesses across the food and agriculture system, act as centres for innovation and entrepreneurial growth for the local food economy, and can serve as an community gathering place and site of education and awareness about local and sustainably produced food.

### City of Vancouver context

Recognizing the need to address potential gaps in local and sustainable food infrastructure, the City of Vancouver is exploring models and a potentially phased approach to enabling, supporting, or facilitating a food hub that meets the demand for local food in a more accessible, flexible and efficient way.

## Food business incubator

### What is a food business incubator?

A business incubator helps develop start-up companies by providing entrepreneurs with an integrated support system, targeted entrepreneurial resources and comprehensive business development services. The goal is to produce successful, financially viable and independent firms that operate in the incubator's service area.

A food business incubator is a business incubator that specializes in food ventures. A food business incubator is typically a licensed, shared and multi-use kitchen facility that provides small-scale food entrepreneurs the space to prepare and process value-added food for the consumer market. Most food business incubators are facilities that include a commercial kitchen that meets rigorous municipal, provincial and federal health guidelines. Food business incubators generally provide training, support and access to other resources and distribution networks, or alternately connect the incubator users to external resources and supports. Such services are what most distinctly distinguishes a food business incubator from a commercial kitchen or commissary. A tenant in a food incubator generally develops their product for either a wholesale or retail market, not both.

The City of Vancouver understands food business incubator as a licensed, shared and multi-use kitchen facility that provides small-scale food entrepreneurs the space to prepare and process value-added food for the consumer market.

### Why do food business incubators matter?

Incubated businesses have the potential to create jobs, revitalize neighbourhoods, commercialize new technologies, and strengthen local and regional economies. Business incubation programs catalyse the process of starting and growing companies by providing entrepreneurs with the expertise, networks and tools they need to make their ventures successful. In addition to providing typical incubator business development services, a food business incubator usually provides highly specialized technical support. Also known as an Incubator Kitchen, a food business incubator is usually supplemented by storage space — such as dry pallet, refrigerated and freezer storage — for incoming ingredients and outgoing finished products. Most kitchens also offer simple, low-volume packaging equipment for packaging dry products, wet products, or both. Food entrepreneurs share the kitchen for

production, eliminating the need for each food specialty venture to construct its own costly, single-user production kitchen.

### City of Vancouver context

In 2011-2012, the City of Vancouver provided grant funding to a consortium of community organizations to conduct a food business incubator feasibility study. The purpose of this study was to determine the feasibility of creating a FBI on the 4th floor of the Save-on-Meats building in the DTES. The research findings indicate that there is demand and a demonstrated need for such a facility from a wide-range of individuals, businesses, organizations in the DTES, as well as related industry sectors. The building, infrastructure and expertise that presently exist in the Save-on-Meats building all complement the needs and functionality of a social enterprise food business incubator model that could co-locate multiple users and capacities. In addition to providing much needed employment opportunities and revenue in the DTES,

## Examples of best practices

**Food Innovation Centre at Rutgers University:** The Food Innovation Center at Rutgers University epitomizes best practices because of its considerable scope of educational and facility resources and programs. There are many more examples of community-shared commercial kitchens but they are often social service agencies, not business based food incubators dedicated to increasing the likelihood of business success and accelerating the growth of entrepreneurial food ventures.

**La Cocina: San Francisco's First Incubator Kitchen:** The mission of La Cocina is to cultivate low-income food entrepreneurs as they formalize and grow their businesses by providing affordable commercial kitchen space, industry-specific technical assistance and access to market and capital opportunities. La Cocina focuses primarily on women from communities of colour and immigrant communities. La Cocina's vision is that entrepreneurs will become economically self-sufficient and contribute to a vibrant economy doing what they love to do. La Cocina is a ground-breaking business incubator designed to reduce the obstacles that often prevent entrepreneurs from creating successful and sustainable small businesses. By providing shared resources and an array of industry-specific services, business incubators ensure small businesses can succeed. La Cocina follows this model by providing commercial kitchen space and technical assistance focusing on low-income women and immigrant entrepreneurs who are launching, growing and formalizing food businesses.

the proposed food business incubator could also serve to support the needs of food-focused businesses located in other neighbourhoods of Vancouver, as well as complementing the facilities, services and programs of a central food hub. Currently, next steps pertaining to a potential food business incubator in the Save-on-Meats building, or elsewhere, are being explored.

### *Mid-scale food distribution actions*

Action #	Action	Timeline
2.1	Conduct environmental scan to determine assets and gaps in mid-scale local and sustainable food aggregation and distribution infrastructure.	Short-term - Priority
2.2	Determine feasibility, core functions, business plan, governance, ownership structure and site for a central food hub.	Short-term - Priority
2.3	Determine feasibility, core functions, business plan, governance, ownership structure and site for a food business incubator.	Short-term
2.4	Support businesses and social enterprises involved in processing and distribution of healthy, local and sustainable food within Vancouver and connect to local agricultural producers in the region.	Short-term

## *Integration: Making connections between local food hubs, food business incubators and food strategy goals*



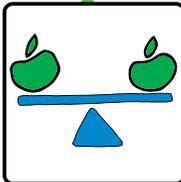
### *Support food friendly neighbourhoods*

Provides connections with neighbourhood food networks, farmers markets, and other community activities. Improves local food infrastructure.



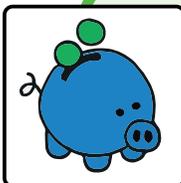
### *Empower residents to take action*

Empowers citizens to make more informed food purchasing decisions, and promotes support for local farmers and protection of BC farm land.



### *Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents*

Increases opportunity for burgeoning food entrepreneurs (particularly low income or newcomer food entrepreneurs) to launch food businesses.



### *Make food a centrepiece of Vancouver's green economy*

Supports local producers and processors. Enhances the local food economy.

## Local and sustainable food procurement for City facilities

### What is local and sustainable food procurement?

Local and sustainable food procurement refers to food purchasing decisions made in a way that considers not only cost and quality, but equally a full range of social, health and environmental sustainability factors associated with conditions of production, processing, and transportation of food.

The City of Vancouver understands local and sustainable food procurement as a comprehensive approach to purchasing, where possible, locally grown and/or sustainably produced food for City operations including but not limited to the Community Services Group and the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation.

### Why local and sustainable food procurement for City facilities matters

Over the past number of decades, our food supply chains have become ever more distant and concentrated in the hands of fewer — and often far-away — food processors and distributors. Bringing institutional food purchasing decisions closer to home, has a number of benefits:

- City purchasing practices can influence food service companies and distributors to shift purchases to local sustainable food
- local and sustainable food purchasing supports local (urban, peri-urban and BC-based) farmers and processors by providing stable markets for local, sustainable food and contribute to local economic development
- shifting purchasing towards local and sustainable food can help create opportunities for new local supply chains and processing infrastructure (e.g. a central food hub, food business incubator), and
- increasing the availability of local and sustainable food improves consumer knowledge and awareness about its benefits.

### City of Vancouver context

In 2005, City Council approved the Ethical Purchasing Policy. The policy focuses on fair trade agricultural products and apparel items. This policy ensures that all suppliers to the City meet, at a minimum, the performance standards outlined in the Supplier Code of Conduct which includes core labour conventions of the International Labour Organization. The policy demonstrates a commitment to sustainability by seeking to ensure safe

and healthy workplaces for the people who make products for the City of Vancouver, where human and civil rights are respected.

In 2009, the City adopted a Corporate Procurement Policy to guide procurement for the City of Vancouver (including Vancouver Park Board, Vancouver Police Board, and the Vancouver Library Board). The City's sustainable and ethical objectives were incorporated directly into the policy. With this change, the City envisioned that wherever possible, sustainability and ethical considerations would be included as integral evaluation components in procurement. This approach builds on previous work including the City's Principles of Sustainability (2002), Energy Efficiency Policy, the Ethical Policy and Supplier Code of Conduct (2005).

In December 2011, Council approved the Greenest City Action Plan which identified the creation of a local and sustainable food purchasing policy as a high priority. In December 2011, the City of Vancouver contracted with Local Food Plus (LFP) to develop, establish and initiate implementation of a comprehensive Local and Sustainable Food Procurement Action Plan. This initiative is aimed at increasing the amount of local and sustainably produced food purchased by, and served in City of Vancouver and Vancouver Parks Board facilities. The intention is to align the policy with the Corporate Strategic Business Plan Goal 3: "Lead the Way on Green (in City operations) and Environmental Sustainable Operations for City Operations through sustainable product specifications." The policy will also align with Ethical Procurement Policy, Supplier Code of Conduct and Sustainable and Ethical Procurement Policy processes and objectives.

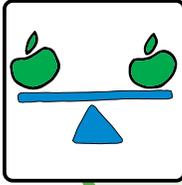
## Example of best practices

**Town of Markham, Ontario: Local Food Purchasing Plan.** Markham, Ontario is a town of 300,000 residents. Through a partnership with the organization, Local Food Plus, Markham shifted towards local and sustainable food purchasing practices starting with the Markham Civic Centre. They expanded to include a cafeteria and food service contract serving 500 staff and 1000 students neighbouring high school. New food service contract criteria were set including: local sustainable foods, fair trade items, healthy choices menu and zero waste. By year three of the initiative, Markham's percentage of local sustainable food was verified at 25 per cent of the total food purchase budget. The process has been collaborative, educational and empowering for staff, Council, as well as the food service provider through the development of new supply chains and direct farmer connections.

*Local and sustainable food procurement  
by City facilities actions*

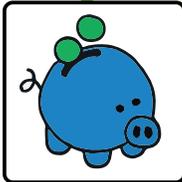
Action #	Action	Timeline
2.5	Measure the percentage of local and sustainable food procured by the City and make recommendations for an appropriate local and sustainable food target.	Short-term - Priority
2.6	Explore opportunities to increase the percentage of local and sustainable food purchased by City and school facilities as a way to support local farmers and producers.	Short-term - Priority
2.7	Explore opportunities to increase the percentage of local and sustainable food purchased by Park facilities including community centres and concessions in parks and beaches.	Short-term - Priority
2.8	Examine opportunities for aggregation of local and sustainable food purchasing among neighbourhood houses, smaller community centres and childcare centres.	Short-term - Priority

*Integration: Making connections between local and sustainable food procurement and food strategy goals*



*Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents*

Improves access to local, healthy food by increasing the number and variety of locations where local, sustainable food is available.



*Make food a centrepiece of Vancouver's green economy*

Supports local producers and processors. Enhances the local food economy.



*Advocate for a just and sustainable food system with partners and at all levels of government*

Provides opportunities to advocate for support of local (B.C.) farmers and protection of Agricultural Land Reserve.



Photo: Metha Brown

# Community kitchens

## What is a community kitchen?

A community kitchen is a publicly accessible kitchen where community members gather to prepare meals together. Since a licensed commercial kitchen is not required, groups often meet in community facilities with available kitchens such as churches, neighbourhood houses or community centres. Community kitchens typically have skill-building components including education about nutrition or food preparation techniques including canning or preserving. Community kitchens can be organized to serve specific population groups or people with particular dietary needs. They also function as community gathering places where space, skills and resources are shared.

The City of Vancouver understands community kitchen as a public facility where people have the opportunity to come together to share the cost, planning and preparation of healthy meals.

## Why do community kitchens matter?

Community kitchens form an important part of a neighbourhood's food assets, both as public facilities to prepare food, but equally as sites of education, community-building and interaction. Community kitchens can provide cost savings to participants through bulk buying. Community kitchens provide spaces for citizens with common interests, ethno-cultural backgrounds or health needs to come together and share knowledge. This includes people with diabetes or those at risk for it, and those living with HIV/AIDS, multicultural kitchens, kitchens for singles who enjoy cooking with others, vegetarians, families with young children, or people living on low income. Community kitchens are often used to complement existing food system activities such as community gardening, or social programming including language learning or inter-cultural understanding.

## City of Vancouver context

There are currently at least 50 community kitchens in Vancouver. Community kitchens are often community-driven programs, therefore are not "City" programs. Rather, community kitchens typically garner support through a combination of sources including the use of their host institution's kitchen (e.g. a church, community centre or neighbourhood house), grants from funders including the City of Vancouver or The United Way, and other capacity building supports. The primary mechanism used by the City of Vancouver to support and enable community kitchens is grant funding to Vancouver's

neighbourhood food networks and Neighbourhood Houses, some of which host community kitchens as a part of existing programs and services.

## Examples of best practices

**Fresh Choice Kitchens** works to create opportunities for people to cook together, thereby building community strength through food. What began as a Vancouver area effort in the mid-'90s has evolved into a community kitchen resource for all B.C. It creates and collects educational tools and shares them through workshops,

The Greater Vancouver Food Bank runs the **Downtown Eastside Community Kitchen (DECK)** which is a community kitchen for low-income communities, some of whom are coping with challenging health conditions such as diabetes, hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS, and various addictions. For many participants, home is a room in a residential hotel or SRO and that presents its own challenges for meal preparation, because SROs seldom come with adequate cooking facilities.

## Community kitchens actions

Action #	Actions	Timeline
2.9	Encourage installation of community kitchens or retrofit existing kitchens in new developments, social housing sites or City facilities.	Short-term
2.10	Analyze current opportunities and challenges facing community kitchens.	Mid-term
2.11	Compile an inventory of available under-utilized kitchen space in Vancouver where community kitchens could be held.	Mid-term

## *Integration: Making connections between community kitchens and food strategy goals*



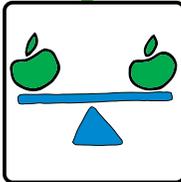
### *Support food friendly neighbourhoods*

Complements activities and programming of community centres, neighbourhood houses, neighbourhood food networks, farmers markets and other community food activities.



### *Empower residents to take action*

Empowers citizens with knowledge and awareness about food preparation. Promotes social inclusion and community capacity-building.



### *Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents*

Improves access to local, healthy food. Promotes healthy eating.





Photo: Thien Phan

# Food access

## What is food access?

Of all of the parts of the food system, food access may be the most complex for the simple reason that it is rooted in notions of justice and equity related to the basic human need to nourish ourselves. Food access is sometimes equated with the notion of food security.



Although there are dozens of definitions of food security, one of the most common is that of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The FAO defines food security as:

“... a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” (2001)

The flipside of food security is food insecurity which can be understood to exist when people do not have adequate physical, social or economic access to food as defined above.

## Why “food access” and not “food security”?

While recognizing the relevance of existing definitions of food security, the City of Vancouver’s food strategy uses the concept of food access. The reason for referring to food access instead of food security is not to minimize the importance of the latter’s central tenets. Rather, the City of Vancouver’s understanding of food access strongly affirms the principles commonly

associated with food security, while at the same time setting them within a wider range of strategies to create resilient food secure neighbourhoods. These wider strategies include community capacity-building and skill building opportunities, educational programs, community celebrations and awareness-raising on food system issues. In this way, food access becomes a priority for all citizens, not only the most vulnerable.

The City of Vancouver adopts a broader notion of food access to allow a focus on policies and development levers designed to increase food retail options. These are aimed at improving access to healthier, fresher food options for all residents. This can include community food markets, mobile healthy food vending or healthy corner stores. In this way, both human capacity and built environment dimensions of food access are considered.

The City of Vancouver understands food access as policies, processes or programs that create the conditions for the following food security attributes to be met:

- **Availability:** Sufficient food for all people at all times
- **Accessibility:** Physical and economic access to food for all at all times
- **Adequacy:** Access to food that is nutritious and safe, and produced in environmentally sustainable ways
- **Acceptability:** Access to culturally diverse food, which is produced and obtained in ways that do not compromise people's dignity, self-respect or human rights
- **Agency:** The policies and processes that enable the achievement of food security

These food security attributes are assumed to be set within wider food access processes and activities that prioritize 1) community capacity-building exercise of skill building, and educational opportunities, community celebrations, and raising awareness on food access issues, and 2) policies and development levers designed to increase non-traditional food retail options in the built environment aimed at improving access to healthier, fresher food options particularly for vulnerable populations and under-served parts of the city.

### Why food access matters

Although we live in a city and region with tremendous natural resources and political stability, we are not immune to social, health and economic inequities. These inequities result in food access barriers, particularly for nutritionally vulnerable groups.

## Food access topics In Vancouver

In relation to the aim of creating a just and sustainable food system for Vancouver, the main areas in relation to food access are:

- neighbourhood food networks
- farmers markets
- community food markets
- healthy food retail, such as mobile green grocers, healthy corner store programs
- street food vending

Photo: Michael Joseph Ogaz



## Neighbourhood food networks

### What are neighbourhood food networks?

The City of Vancouver understands neighbourhood food networks (NFNs) as coalitions of citizens, organizations and agencies that work collaboratively in and across Vancouver neighbourhoods to address food system issues with the goal of improving access to healthy, affordable and nutritious food for all.

### Why neighbourhood food networks matter

NFNs are powerful community-based engines that catalyse action, knowledge and skill, building on a range of food system issues. NFNs facilitate community connectedness through food-based programs including community gardening, healthy eating, multicultural cooking clubs, seniors cooking classes, and reading nutritional labels. These activities enable learning, sharing, and celebration opportunities connected to food. Just as importantly, NFNs use food programs and projects to promote inclusion, participation and capacity-building in communities.

### City of Vancouver context

Both the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Coast Health (VCH) recognize the value of NFNs in building neighbourhood food system resiliency. The City of Vancouver identifies NFNs as a priority area in the Greenest City Action Plan and the Healthy City Strategy (under development), and has supported them since 2010 through grant funding and other capacity building supports. VCH began funding NFNs even earlier. A recent evaluation by VCH of all funded NFNs indicates that such networks add tremendous value to community food system projects.

In spite of strong support by both organizations and proven outcomes, the challenge has been consistency and adequacy of funding, particularly given the steady increase in the number of NFNs in recent years. VCH contracted with food system specialists to develop a more systematic, financial and organizationally viable model to support NFNs across the city. The findings and recommendations of the consultancy are now being analyzed to determine next steps.

Through consolidating efforts and partnering with agencies, funders, and other levels of government, Vancouver has a strategic opportunity to help build stability and sustainability for NFNs, as well as the infrastructural food assets they require to deliver their programming. This includes community kitchens, community gardens and composting sites. These community food

assets provide spaces and facilities to support food preparation, learning, distribution, consumption and importantly, a social space for food celebration.

## Examples of best practices

- The number of Neighbourhood food networks (NFNs) increased from five to seven since 2010.
- In 2011, almost 20,000 people benefitted from the work of NFNs.
- In 2012, six NFNs received funding through City of Vancouver grants.
- The six funded NFNs have coordinators and specific programming and projects geared towards vulnerable populations.
- Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute has an active rooftop garden, coordinates family cooking workshops, seniors' lunches and community kitchens.
- Grandview Woodland Food Connection organizes bulk buying clubs and involved in school garden projects.
- Cedar Cottage Food Network organizes monthly mobile community food markets, community potlucks, and tasting kitchens.
- Westside Food Collaborative organizes seasonal community food markets and collaborates with students on community projects

## Neighbourhood food network actions

Action #	Action	Timeline
3.1	Stabilize multi-year core funding for NFN Coordinators in partnership with other funders or levels of government (e.g. Vancouver Coastal Health).	Short-term - Priority
3.2	Facilitate the creation of office space to accommodate neighbourhood food network coordinators in community centres and/or neighbourhood houses.	Short-term - Priority
3.3	Support an outreach strategy that brings together neighbourhood food networks and a broad range of individuals, diverse groups, businesses and other sectors.	Short-term

## *Integration: Making connections between neighbourhood food networks and food system goals*



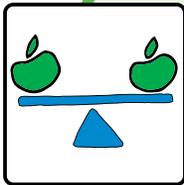
### *Support food friendly neighbourhoods*

NFNs offer neighbourhood-level social gathering spaces for residents to connect and learn.



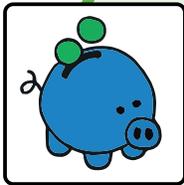
### *Empower residents to take action*

NFNs create and expand neighbourhood-level opportunities for capacity-building, educational skill-building amongst diverse community members.



### *Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents*

NFNs put foreground issues of food justice and food equity in communities.



### *Make food a centrepiece of Vancouver's green economy*

NFNs create food-related volunteer and employment opportunities for community members and program participants.



### *Advocate for a just and sustainable food system with partners and at all levels of government*

NFNs partner with funders, health authorities, and other levels of government.

## Farmers markets

### What is a farmers market?

A farmers market is a public market at which farmers and other agricultural producers and small artisan food businesses sell directly to consumers.

The City of Vancouver understands farmers market as an open air or fully or partly covered market, for the sale of local fresh, dried or frozen fruit and vegetables, local dried or frozen meat and seafood, local dairy products, local plants, local prepared, local ready-to-eat foods and local artisan crafts.

### Why farmers markets matter

Farmers markets provide a wide range of inter-connected benefits. They benefit producers by providing reliable market outlets, supporting local green food jobs providing opportunities for farmers to connect directly with consumers and reducing transport and packaging requirements, thus reducing costs for farmers. Consumers benefit by getting to know their food producers and processors, helping to improve diet and nutrition by providing access to fresh food. Farmers markets reduce the distance food travels and reduce food packaging. Finally, farmers markets benefit the community and the local economy by creating dynamic public gathering places, encouraging social interaction and creating employment.

### City of Vancouver context

In 1997, the East Vancouver Farmers Market Society hosted Vancouver's first farmers market in Trout Lake Community Centre. Since 1997, Vancouver's farmers markets have grown dramatically in number and popularity. In June 2010, there were four farmers markets. By 2012, there were nine farmers markets operating in Vancouver, contributing approximately \$13 million dollars to the local economy every year.

In 2010, a number of by-law amendments and interim actions were put in place by the City of Vancouver. These policies were intended to address challenges facing the markets and facilitate their operations.

In November 2011, city staff convened a roundtable discussion with market operators to begin to brainstorm ideas for a long-term strategic plan for farmers markets. The interim period ended in April 2012. Staff have begun to assess the impact of the new by-laws and guidelines. In 2013, a review of the interim farmers market policy will go forward to City Council for approval.





Photo: Michael Joseph Ogaz

## Farmers market actions

Action #	Action	Timeline
<b>3.4</b>	Review and update interim farmers market policy, including permitting processes, permitting, fees, licensing, and percentage of agricultural foods.	Short-term - Priority
<b>3.5</b>	Explore opportunities to support farmers markets on Park Board sites with electricity and water where appropriate.	Short-term - Priority
<b>3.6</b>	Create long-term strategic plan for farmers markets in Vancouver (10 year vision; geographical distribution; conditions for expansion; links between larger markets and community food markets; gaps in market or food system infrastructure).	Mid-term
<b>3.7</b>	Identify opportunities for multi-purpose structures and other infrastructure to be used for farmers markets and other community events.	Mid-term
<b>3.8</b>	increase the number of farmers' markets in Vancouver from nine to 22 by 2020.	Long-term

## *Integration: Making connections between farmers markets and food strategy goals*



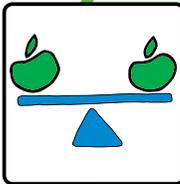
### *Support food friendly neighbourhoods*

Provides vibrant community gathering places, encourages connections with neighbourhood food networks, farmers markets and other community food activities. Improves local food infrastructure.



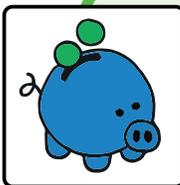
### *Empower residents to take action*

Empowers citizens to make more informed food purchasing decisions, and promotes support for local farmers and protection of B.C. farm land.



### *Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents*

Improves access to local, healthy food.



### *Make food a centrepiece of Vancouver's green economy*

Supports local producers and processors. Enhances the local food economy.



### *Advocate for a just and sustainable food system with partners and at all levels of government*

Provides opportunities to advocate for support of local (B.C.) farmers and protection of Agricultural Land Reserve.

## Community food markets

### What are community food markets?

Community Food Markets (CFM), previously referred to as pocket markets, are small markets for the sale of fresh and/or locally-prepared fruits and vegetables. This includes fresh fruits and vegetables as well as healthy locally-prepared fruits and vegetables such as jams and jellies. These food options benefit: a) residents by increasing access to fresh foods and healthy locally-prepared foods, b) small-scale businesses by providing a local market base, and c) market operators by allowing them to diversify their vendors.

### Why community food markets matter

While Vancouver's farmers markets continue to grow steadily in number and popularity, there is still a need to improve opportunities for smaller produce stands (or CFMs) that often serve different, harder to reach populations. They occur in non-traditional sites, such as Neighbourhood Houses, social housing complexes, seniors' centres or office buildings, and address accessibility issues sometimes associated with regular farmers markets, such as physical access or affordability.

Community food markets form an important part of the programming of neighbourhood food networks. They provide a way to bring fresh, nutritious food closer to residents who need it but may not be able to afford to shop at a farmers market or have the means to travel to one. In other cases, community food markets provide opportunities to promote healthy eating for employees in large organizations. Community food markets provide vibrant — although smaller scale — gathering places where neighbours can get to know each other, provide opportunity for food jobs and residents can enjoy affordable fresh food.

### City of Vancouver context

Since 2009, community-based organizations such as neighbourhood food networks, have organized community food markets where community members coordinate the sale of healthy foods from a neighbourhood house or social service agency. Community food market coordinators purchase healthy produce at wholesale prices or direct from farmers, and re-sell it at cost to the general public, typically with a discount to seniors and other vulnerable populations. Access to affordable, healthy foods is the priority. Some, but not all, source local and organic produce.

In spite of their popularity, community food markets have encountered challenges related to their definition. These include the permitting process, fees and other licensing requirements that can make it prohibitive for small operators to run community food markets in their communities. These issues are currently being addressed.

## Examples of best practices

In partnership with the Kitsilano Neighbourhood House and the Society Promoting Environmental Conservation, the Westside Food Collaborative operates the **Westside Community Food Market** as a social enterprising food access initiative. The market serves as an educational vehicle for local and seasonal eating and to learn about preparing and cooking new local produce. The market focuses on ensuring food access to low-income groups, with attention on low-income seniors in the neighbourhood and for the general public.

**Cedar Cottage Food Security Network** and **South Vancouver Neighbourhood Food Network Mobile Pocket Market**: These groups source fresh produce in bulk and sell it in underserved neighbourhoods at cost, with a reduced rate for seniors. The market currently operates on a mobile model, using a van to deliver food to two B.C. Housing sites and two social service agencies.

Vancouver's Greenest City Grants Funding for a **Pocket Market Coupon Program** (2010) enabled financial supports for low-income residents to purchase discounted coupons that can be exchanged for fresh produce at a pocket market.



## Community food market actions

Action #	Actions	Timeline
3.9	Establish community food markets as a permitted use and streamline application process.	Short-term - Priority
3.10	Encourage integration of community food markets into Vancouver School Board programming as part of healthy food options for youth and families.	Short-term - Priority
3.11	Incorporate community food markets into community centre programming.	Mid-term
3.12	Increase the number of community food markets in Vancouver from four to 15 by the year 2020.	Long-term



## *Integration: Making connections between community food markets and other food strategy goals*



### *Support food friendly neighbourhoods*

Improves access to affordable, fresh and healthy produce in all neighbourhoods, with a focus on vulnerable populations and under-served parts of the city.



### *Empower residents to take action*

Mobilizes neighbourhood food networks and other community organizers to take action in improving food access.



### *Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents*

Community food markets address equity issues by enabling more affordable and proximate access to fresh food.



## Healthy food retail

### What is healthy food retail?

The City of Vancouver understands healthy food retail as neighbourhood-based programs, policies or services that operate with a mandate to improve access to fresh, healthy food for vulnerable groups and/or the general population. Small-scale healthy food retail can include mobile green grocers, healthy corner store programs, or pop up grocery stores, such as shipping containers used as temporary grocery stores in under-served parts of the city.

Community food markets are considered one form of small-scale healthy food retail, however they are addressed separately due to their specific nature and relation to farmers markets.

Healthy food retail differs from regular food retail in 1) scale of operation (generally small-scale, low impact), 2) a focus on healthier food options, and local, where possible, 3) attention to under-served parts of the city, and 4) use of infrastructure that can be re-located to different sites based on need, such as pop up grocery stores or mobile green grocers.

### Why healthy food retail matters

Challenges exist for many residents in accessing fresh and healthy food, whether for reasons of physical access, lack of familiarity with certain foods, or affordability. Healthy food retail programs and services provide innovative small-scale options that reduce barriers to fresh food for all residents with a particular focus on vulnerable groups and under-served parts of the city.

Healthy food retail options such as healthy corner stores and pop up grocery stores make sense for many reasons. Although some residents may want to shop at a full-service grocery store, it can be a challenging, multi-year process to attract one to a neighbourhood in need. In addition, assumptions about operating in low-income communities and misconceptions about purchasing power in these areas can pose barriers to food retail development. Local governments and their partners can play an important role in helping existing small retailers and other community-based operators address these challenges, recognize the opportunities, and operate successfully in local neighbourhoods.

Many communities have an existing base of small food retail stores where residents already shop. Working with these retailers can be one effective

strategy that uses existing infrastructure to improve access to healthy foods. In other cases, temporary movable infrastructure such as reclaimed shipping containers or mobile green grocers can provide creative and agile responses to gaps in fresh food access.

### City of Vancouver context

Vancouver will explore its own approaches to increasing food access through innovative food models, learning from successful food retailer programs in other North American cities.

## Examples of best practices

In **New York City**, 1,000 Green Carts permits have been issued to sell fresh produce in outer boroughs to bring fresh fruits and vegetables to underserved neighbourhoods.

Stockbox Grocers is a miniature grocery store in **Seattle** that is tucked inside a reclaimed shipping container and placed into the parking lot of an existing business or organization. Stockbox stores are designed to offer essential grocery items and fresh produce to communities that don't currently have access to good food. Stockbox's goal is to create dozens of stores located in urban food deserts and within walking distance of home, work and school.

A new healthy corner store project is set to start in **Toronto**, sponsored by the city's public health department. Perceived barriers to selling fresh foods include a lack of refrigeration and storage space. Also, taking care of fresh produce takes extra time and labour, which many small stores lack. Since it is also difficult for smaller stores to access fresh food distributors, the project coordinator hopes to organize a local produce distribution network that will help store owners save money, as well as support local farmers.

## Healthy food retail actions

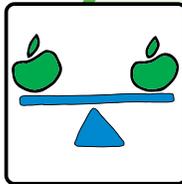
Action #	Actions	Timeline
3.13	Review existing mobile food vending program as one opportunity to promote mobile green grocers.	Short-term
3.14	Test pilot programs that improve access to healthy food in neighbourhoods (e.g. healthy corner stores, pop-up grocery stores or mobile green grocers).	Mid-term

### *Integration: Making connections between healthy food retail options and food strategy goals*



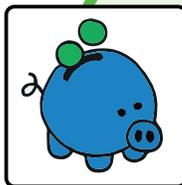
#### *Support food friendly neighbourhoods*

Capitalizes on using both existing and moveable infrastructure to increase access to fresh, healthy produce with a focus on neighbourhoods that have limited healthy food options.



#### *Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents*

Improves access to affordable, local, culturally diverse foods for diverse residents and their diverse needs.



#### *Make food a centrepiece of Vancouver's green economy*

Innovative neighbourhood-based food retail options supports local producers, small-scale retailers and other operators, and enhances existing businesses.

## Street food vending

### What Is street food vending?

The City of Vancouver's Street Food Program encourages street vending which includes food, original artwork, crafts and flowers. Street vending is seen as bringing people together, creating an outlet for the public to have the convenience of street-level products and enlivening the public realm. The Street Food Program encompasses the sale of approved food and non-alcoholic beverages on City streets.

### Why street food matters

Street food vending enlivens the public realm, promotes neighbourhood vitality, encourages pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly communities, and improves the sense of place. Street food vending increases opportunities for



Photo: Michael Joseph Ogaz

micro-enterprise and small business incubation, and enhances the economic vitality of areas where street food vending takes place. Street food also increases access to affordable, culturally diverse food.

## City of Vancouver Context

In 2008, Council requested that staff work with the Vancouver Food Policy Council to:

- expand the variety of food sold through street vendors with a focus on foods that are nutritious and represent the cultural diversity of Vancouver
- expand the geographical area in which street vendors selling food can operate, and
- increase access to affordable, nutritious food in low-income communities through the Street Vendor program.

The expanded street food program began as a pilot program in June 2010. The purpose was to offer a range of new culturally diverse healthy food choices. Additional program enhancements were approved by Council in January 2011. Approximately 15 new street food vending locations are expected each year until 2014. In November, 2012, there were 103 street food vendors operating in Vancouver, and the street food program continues to grow. The program has been a hit with local, national and international food critics and bloggers, and has become the focus for organized Street Food Vancouver grouped events.

In 2012, the City's street food program expanded to City parks with three pilot sites identified. Street food vending now provides a much needed expansion of food options to park users with a particular focus on menu offerings that are high quality, healthy and culturally diverse.



## Example of best practices

**Portland** boasts more than 500 food carts, turning the city into a full-fledged urban phenomenon. Some are clustered into pods in parking lots and others are stationed on sidewalks. What makes Portland’s street food scene so distinctive and appealing is how vendors push the traditional boundaries, redefining the city’s relationship with food and the public realm. Street vendors range from a bicycle, pushcart, custom-built food cart, travel trailer, or even a WWII military mobile kitchen with a diverse menu of food items from all over the world and with unique creativity.

### *Street food vending actions*

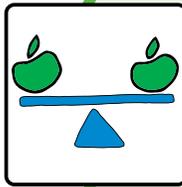
Action #	Action	Timeline
3.15	Convene regular meetings between City staff, vendors and other stakeholders, including Business Improvement Associations, to identify issues and mitigate conflicts.	Short-term
3.16	Explore options to enable street food vending on private property.	Short-term
3.17	Review and provide recommendations for the mobile food vending program.	Short-term
3.18	Encourage street food vendors to source local and sustainable ingredients in their menus, and require vendors to use reusable, recyclable or compostable packaging.	Short-term
3.19	Encourage street food vending as an economic development opportunity for low-income groups.	Mid-term

## Integration: Making connections between street food vending and food strategy goals



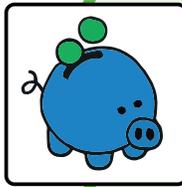
### *Support food friendly neighbourhoods*

Street food vending enlivens the public realm, promotes neighbourhood vitality, encourages pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly communities, and improves sense of place.



### *Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents*

Street food offers affordable, culturally diverse food to citizens.



### *Make food a centrepiece of Vancouver's green economy*

Street food vending increases opportunities for micro-enterprise and small business incubation, and enhances the economic vitality of areas where street food vending takes place.



Photo: Michael Joseph Ogaz



Photo: Joseph Brock (Creative Commons)

# Food waste management

## What is food waste management?

The City of Vancouver understands food waste as any food substance, raw or cooked, that is discarded, or intended or required to be discarded. Food waste management refers to the collection of food waste for the purposes of landfill diversion, processing and transformation into compost or other materials, and the reduction of greenhouse gases.



## Why food waste management matters

A staggering amount of food waste is created as a result of food production, processing, distribution, packaging and consumption, making strategies to manage it essential. Best practices to manage food waste attempt to shift attitudes and actions to a closed-loop system where all food resources are put to their highest and best use.

There are three important components to reducing food waste. The first is prioritizing the reduction of food related waste at the source. This includes reducing the amount of packaging material associated with food products. For instance, minimizing the use of plastic wrap, boxes, disposable take-out containers, coffee cups and packaging of processed food. Various levels of food supply chains from food processors, packers and residents can play a role in reducing the amount of food packaging waste.

Secondly, there are significant inefficiencies to be addressed in the food supply chain that result in food ending up in landfills before it even reaches the consumer. Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) estimates that 30-40 per cent of waste that is directed to landfill is food waste which is comprised of viable, wasted food and food scraps. Factors that influence the amount of food waste include over-production, over-purchasing, complex and lengthy transportation logistics, and inefficient processing.

A third component relates to ensuring compostables are diverted out of the waste stream. Compostables, such as food scraps, food-soiled paper and yard trimmings, make up about 33 per cent of municipal solid waste overall and about 42 per cent of solid waste coming from residential households. Compostables from single-family residences consist of approximately 14 per cent fruit and vegetable food scraps, 11 per cent meat, bread and dairy food scraps, 10 per cent of food-soiled paper, and 7 per cent yard trimmings. Capturing compostables presents an immediate opportunity to reduce garbage and prevent methane, a significant contributor to climate-changing greenhouse gases, from being generated in landfills.

Collecting and processing compostables offers tremendous potential for creating low-barriers and high-tech green jobs and generating bio-energy. Most importantly related to food, compost produced from food waste can replace commercial fertilizers and can be used in gardens to replenish depleted topsoil in private and public gardens.

## City of Vancouver context

The City of Vancouver engages in a number of programs to divert food waste from landfill. These include the following:

### *Backyard composting*

The most efficient way of diverting food scraps away from the waste stream is residential backyard composting. In this way, food scraps do not have to be transported to a facility and the soil that is a by-product of the compost can be efficiently used to replenish household gardens. The City offers backyard composters through a program for residents in single- and multi-family residential neighbourhoods. A backyard composter is a black cylindrical bin that can turn uncooked vegetable and fruit scraps, coffee grounds and filters, egg shells, tea bags and yard trimmings (leaves, grass, weeds, etc.)



into a nutrient-rich soil conditioner. Approximately 50 per cent of residents living in single family homes participate in backyard composting. The City is exploring education and awareness raising opportunities to increase the number of participants.

### *Worm composting (for apartments)*

Worm composters are available for residents who live in apartments and do not have a backyard. Worm composting turns uncooked vegetable and fruit scraps, coffee grounds and filters, egg shells, etc., into a nutrient-rich soil conditioner for plants. The City provides a limited number of worm composters at the low price of \$25. The units come complete with the bin, lid and tray, worms, bedding and instructions, and a mandatory one hour workshop at the Compost Demonstration Garden.

### *City-wide food scraps recycling program*

In 2012, building on the successes and learnings of the Food Scraps Pilot program in Sunset and Riley Park neighbourhoods, City Council expanded the Food Scraps Recycling Program across the city to all single-family homes and duplexes — approximately 90,000 homes. Residents are able to add all food scraps and food soiled paper along with yard waste to their green bin.

This means, in addition to uncooked fruits and vegetables, coffee grounds, egg shells and teabags, residents can now add meat, fish, bones, dairy, bread, cooked items and food soiled paper such as napkins, pizza boxes and paper plates. Accompanying this expansion, changes to the collection schedule will occur in the spring of 2013. This will involve a change in the frequency of garbage collection from weekly to bi-weekly service and the collection for yard and food waste will move from bi-weekly to weekly.

Work is also underway to provide food scraps collection services to all multi-unit residences such as apartments and condominiums and commercial businesses to accompany Metro Vancouver's ban on all organic material going to the landfill by 2015.

## Food waste management actions

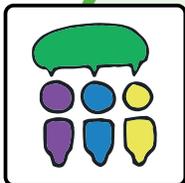
Action #	Action	Timeline
4.1	Expand food scraps pilot program to all single-family residential areas.	Short-term - Priority
4.2	Develop strategies to reduce food packaging in City facilities.	Short-term
4.3	Ensure that food composting is available in City facilities, and that dishes and food packaging are reusable, recyclable or compostable.	Short-term
4.4	Expand food scraps collection to multi-family dwellings.	Short-term
4.5	Explore pilot “food recovery” programs and initiatives to channel surplus edible food to people.	Mid-term
4.6	Support community composting models.	Mid-term

### Integration: Making connections between food waste management and food strategy goals



#### Support food friendly neighbourhoods

Improving infrastructure and programs to support neighbourhood-based food waste management creates more food-friendly neighbourhoods by keeping waste out of landfills, creating compost for use in private and community gardens, and preventing edible food from ending up in the waste stream.



#### Empower residents to take action

Community-based food waste management programs empower residents with knowledge and skills about composting, while at the same time raising awareness about the importance of reducing all forms of waste.

# System-wide tools and approaches

## What are system-wide tools and approaches?

In addition to individual parts of the food system, which themselves are interconnected, there is an additional layer of food system tools and approaches that can be understood as system-wide. This refers to enabling policies, regulatory tools, toolkits or entities that have the potential to embed food system approaches in City business, whether clearly food-related or not.

System-wide tools and approaches create opportunities to add value by placing a food lens on existing and emerging City activities. For example, a system-wide tool might include the creation of a set of guidelines or engagement exercises on creating food friendly neighbourhoods that are prepared in advance for community planning processes, or a developer toolkit to assist applicants in meeting City requirements for sustainable food system elements in new developments. The City's primary system-wide policies, regulatory tools, and toolkits with the highest potential to add value to City activities are in Action 5.1-5.10.

### Policies, tools and toolkits

**Urban Agriculture Design Guidelines.** The urban agriculture design guidelines for the private realm are intended to provide guidance to rezoning proponents on the design of urban agriculture installations where they are proposed, and to be used by city staff in assessing these proposals.

**Grants.** A number of City grant programs have been used to support sustainable food system goals. These include the Greenest City Neighbourhood Grants, Canon Canada Urban Agriculture Fund and Social Responsibility Fund. In addition, the City has created a new funding partnership with the Vancouver Foundation in form of the Green Fund, and collaborates with other levels of government such as Vancouver Coastal Health on funding decisions pertaining to Vancouver's neighbourhood food networks.

## System-wide actions

Action #	Action	Timeline
5.1	Increase access to food resources and information that supports and celebrates healthy and sustainable foods (including materials in multiple languages).	Short-term
5.2	Strengthen alliances and partnerships with other municipalities in Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley regions on food policy.	Short-term
5.3	Advocate for the preservation and enhancement of the Agricultural Land Reserve to protect sustainable food production and to support local economic development.	Short-term
5.4	Support the provincial government in creating a comprehensive anti-poverty program that brings attention to the links between food, health and income.	Short-term
5.5	Facilitate the transition from a charitable food model to one based on principles of a just and sustainable food system.	Short-term
5.6	Ensure that a food systems lens is applied to community planning processes and other public consultation exercises.	Short-term
5.7	Create food system checklist to assist city staff in reviewing development applications, rezoning and/or community plans in new developments, parks and public spaces.	Mid-term
5.8	Create toolkit to assist development applicants to incorporate food system elements in new developments.	Mid-term
5.9	Improve coordination among funders, stakeholders and levels of government to ensure reliable and on-going financial support of neighbourhood-based food initiatives, particularly those delivered by the neighbourhood food networks.	Mid-term
5.10	Promote education and awareness about growing food in backyards, balconies, podiums, rooftops and other spaces in neighbourhoods.	Mid-term



Photo: Thien Phan



Photo: Thien Phan

# Implementation

**B**ased on input from community consultation, policy analyses, current condition of Vancouver's food system, and research on food policies in other jurisdictions, five priority areas have been identified that will be the main focus of activity over the next three years. These priorities present areas where Vancouver must take action to make significant progress on our food system goals. This does not mean that other actions will not be undertaken. Rather, the priority areas will provide a first focus, while still moving other food system actions forward. Information about the specific actions associated with each priority area are detailed in the Actions section of the food strategy.

Accountability is essential to successful implementation of the Vancouver Food Strategy. Because of the many issues and stakeholder groups involved in creating a just and sustainability food system in Vancouver, collective responsibility is key. This means active participation not only by local government, but equally by individual citizens, community groups, institutions, agencies, businesses, governmental partners and other stakeholders. Only by working together will we achieve our food system and sustainability goals. To ensure successful implementation of the Vancouver Food Strategy, a number of City and non-City entities can be identified. City of Vancouver implementation entities (existing and future) include the following:

## Existing City of Vancouver implementation entities

### *Greenest City Action Plan Steering Committee*

The Greenest City Action Plan (GCAP) Steering Committee is made up of senior staff who together guide the implementation of the 10 GCAP areas, of which local food is one. The GCAP local food targets and accountabilities are woven directly into the Vancouver Food Strategy, making this steering committee an important implementation entity both for food system goals, as well as broader sustainability objectives captured in the GCAP.

### *City of Vancouver Food Systems Steering Committee*

The inter-departmental Food Systems Steering Committee (formerly the Urban Agriculture Steering Committee) was struck in 2007. The mandate

of the steering committee is to discuss and problem-solve food system projects and policies. Membership of the committee consists of City staff from Planning, Social Policy, Real Estate, Development Services, Engineering, Parks, Vancouver Food Policy Council and Vancouver School Board.

### *City of Vancouver Inter-Departmental Technical Teams*

There are an emerging number of inter-departmental technical teams that form on a time-limited basis to address specific food system issues that require an immediate coordinated response. Examples include the urban farming technical team, the street food vending technical team and the central food hub technical team.

### *Vancouver Food Policy Council*

Formed in 2004, the Vancouver Food Policy Council is a citizen advisory body comprised of individuals from all sectors of our local food system. The Food Policy Council supports the development of a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver that fosters sustainable and equitable food production, processing, distribution and waste management. The Food Policy Council acts as a convenor and conduit between City and non-City entities.

### *City of Vancouver Food Strategy Implementation Steering Committee*

A steering committee made up of senior managers will be struck to oversee and ensure the implementation of actions identified in the Vancouver Food Strategy. Responsible lead departments and technical teams will report to the steering committee.

## Non-City implementation entities

In addition to City of Vancouver implementation entities, a number of existing and emerging coalitions and stakeholder groups will continue to play an important role in implementing the goals and actions expressed in the Vancouver Food Strategy. These include:

- Vancouver School Board
- Metro Vancouver
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
- University of British Columbia
- Simon Fraser University



Photo: Laura MacDonald



Photo: Metha Brown

# Evaluation and monitoring

**E**valuating and monitoring a city's food system is a complex undertaking due to its inherently multi-faceted nature and the challenge of obtaining and updating meaningful data at a municipal or neighbourhood scale. While a number of methodological tools and indicators have been developed to try to tackle the challenge of measuring food system resilience, research reveals the importance of starting with a baseline of those data that are attainable and realistic, while recognizing that in many cases proxies must be used.

This approach also recognizes the importance of setting food system indicators within broader a socio-economic, public health, ecological and economic context. Finally, best practices reveal that it is most meaningful and realistic to aim for measurement of directional progress, particularly for neighbourhood scale progress, where data will be most challenging to gather.

For these reasons, the evaluation and monitoring of the Vancouver Food Strategy will be based on existing Greenest City targets. Specifically, the over-arching target is:

- Increase city and neighbourhood food assets by 50 per cent over 2010 levels by the year 2020.

Food assets are defined as resources, facilities, services or spaces that are available to residents of the City, either at the city-wide or neighbourhood scale, and which are used to support the City's food system. These include:

- number of food hubs
- number of community kitchens
- number of farmers markets
- number of community produce stands
- food composting facilities and community composting programs
- number of community garden plots/orchards, and
- number of urban farms.

Alongside physical food assets are human capacity or social food assets. A growing number of active community coalitions contribute to Vancouver's landscape of social food assets. This includes the Vancouver Food Policy Council, Vancouver Urban Farmers Society, Village Vancouver, Environmental Youth Alliance and the Vancouver Street Food Association. Although all of these coalitions provide excellent measures of the strength of Vancouver's food system, the primary indicator that will be used in the Vancouver Food

Strategy to measure progress is the presence of neighbourhood food networks, and opportunities for Vancouverites to benefit from their activities.

In addition to measuring existing food assets, additional data gaps still exist in the food system. These data gaps will contribute to making realistic, pragmatic and meaningful decisions towards Vancouver's Food Strategy goals. Information to support this element of monitoring and evaluation will be developed as actions are implemented.



Photo: Michael Joseph Ogaz



Photo: Metha Brown

# Appendix

Vancouver Food Strategy Actions

Action Number	Action	Timeline	Lead Departments	Partners	Complementary Tools, Levers and Policies										
					Community Plans	Community Service Grants	Economic Action Strategy	Greenest City Action Plan	Housing and Homeless Strategy	Healthy City Strategy*	Transportation 2040 Plan	Park Board Local Food Asset Task Force*	Metro Vancouver Food System Strategy	VCH Community Food Action Initiative	Vancouver School Board Sustainability Plan*
<b>Production • Community Garden Actions</b>															
1.1	Explore opportunities to improve security of tenure for community gardens and community orchards on city property.	Short-term - Priority	Engineering - Social Policy - Parks		●			●					●		●
1.2	Improve accessibility and clarity of application processes for creating or participating in community gardens and community orchards, particularly for under-represented ethno-cultural communities.	Short-term - Priority	Social Policy - Parks - Engineering						●	●					●
1.3	Encourage community garden models which promote community development opportunities with local schools, Neighbourhood Houses, and other local organizations as part of their education programming.	Short-term - Priority	Parks - Engineering - Social Policy	Vancouver School Board, Neighbourhood Houses	●					●		●			
1.4	Create healthy soil guidelines for community gardens informed by environmental best practices.	Short-term - Priority	Social Policy										●	●	
1.5	Enhance funding partnerships to support the creation, operation, improvement and capacity building opportunities for community gardens and community orchards.	Short-term	Sustainability Office - Social Policy - Parks - Engineering			●							●		
1.6	Facilitate the creation of an Association of Community Garden Coordinators to assist in capacity building, information sharing and overall garden development across the city.	Short-term	Social Policy - Parks - Engineering	Community garden coordinators	●	●				●		●		●	
1.7	Update existing, and develop new land use policies, zoning, and other regulatory levers, such as Community Amenity Contributions, to bolster the creation of community gardens and other forms of urban agriculture.	Mid-term	Development Services - Planning - Parks - Social Infrastructure - Sustainability Office						●	●					●
1.8	Work with the Association of Community Garden Coordinators to implement strategies that will reduce community garden waiting lists and to improve access for ethno-cultural communities.	Mid-term	Social Policy	Community garden coordinators	●							●		●	
1.9	Increase the number of community garden plots in Vancouver from 3,640 to 5,000 by the year 2020 (five to six new gardens per year).	Long-term	Social Policy - Engineering - Parks	Vancouver School Board	●			●	●				●		●

Action Number	Action	Timeline	Lead Departments	Partners	Complementary Tools, Levers and Policies										
					Community Plans	Community Service Grants	Economic Action Strategy	Greenest City Action Plan	Housing and Homeless Strategy	Healthy City Strategy*	Transportation 2040 Plan	Park Board Local Food Asset Task Force*	Metro Vancouver Food System Strategy	VCH Community Food Action Initiative	Vancouver School Board Sustainability Plan*
<b>Production • Urban Farms</b>															
1.10	Create policy to enable commercial food production (urban farming) as a defined use on zoned lands with appropriate limitations and mitigation strategies.	Short-term - Priority	Development Services - Planning - Social Infrastructure - Social Policy	Urban Farming Society			●	●					●	●	
1.11	Explore possibilities for urban farmers to sell produce directly from an urban farm (farm gate sales) with appropriate limitations and mitigation strategies.	Short-term - Priority	Development Services - Planning - Licensing	Urban Farming Society			●			●					
1.12	Enable alternative food retail and distribution models for urban farming produce such as community food markets, food distribution hubs and pre-approved Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) distribution sites in locations such as community centres, neighbourhood houses and schools.	Short-term - Priority	Development Services - Social Infrastructure - Social Policy - Planning	Urban Farming Society			●			●				●	
1.13	Create urban farming business license category.	Short-term - Priority	Licensing - Development Services	Urban Farming Society			●								
1.14	Create healthy soil guidelines for urban farms informed by environmental best practices.	Short-term - Priority	Social Policy	Urban Farming Society									●	●	
1.15	Create a baseline of existing models of urban farms, monitor changes, and integrate new models as they emerge.	Short-term - Priority	Social Policy	Urban Farming Society											
1.16	Increase the number of urban farms in Vancouver from 17 to 35 by the year 2020, ranging from backyard farms to mid-scale operations.	Long-term	Development Services - Planning - Social Infrastructure - Social Policy	Urban Farming Society	●		●	●		●			●		
<b>Production • Edible Landscaping Actions</b>															
1.17	Encourage implementation of Green Streets and Blooming Boulevards program guidelines to allow for growing vegetables and other food plants in residential boulevards, traffic circles and bulges.	Short-term	Engineering - Communications	Green Streets volunteers	●	●		●		●	●				
1.18	Promote edible landscaping as an alternative to ornamental or flowering plants in residential, commercial, institutional and parks landscaping plans.	Mid-term	Parks - Planning - Development Services		●					●					
1.19	Increase the planting of food-bearing trees when planting new trees in parks and on other civic lands, and encourage community stewardship of those trees.	Mid-term	Parks - Engineering		●			●		●		●		●	

Action Number	Action	Timeline	Lead Departments	Partners	Complementary Tools, Levers and Policies										
					Community Plans	Community Service Grants	Economic Action Strategy	Greenest City Action Plan	Housing and Homeless Strategy	Healthy City Strategy*	Transportation 2040 Plan	Park Board Local Food Asset Task Force*	Metro Vancouver Food System Strategy	VCH Community Food Action Initiative	Vancouver School Board Sustainability Plan*
<b>Production • Beekeeping Actions</b>															
1.20	Review and update existing guidelines to consider conditions under which beekeeping on rooftops, institutions and higher density locations could be permissible.	Mid-term	Licensing - Development Services - Social Policy	Local bee clubs; Provincial Ministry of Agriculture and Lands										●	●
1.21	Explore options to allow sale of honey directly from an urban farm (farm gate sales) with appropriate limitations and mitigation strategies.	Mid-term	Licensing - Development Services - Social Policy	Local bee clubs; Provincial Ministry of Agriculture and Lands; Vancouver Coastal Health			●								●
1.22	Support public education programs on pollinator bees, honeybees and beekeeping in response to community demand and interest.	Mid-term	Social Policy - Communications	Local bee clubs; Provincial Ministry of Agriculture and Lands	●					●					●
<b>Production • Backyard Hens Actions</b>															
1.23	Explore options to allow the sale of the eggs of backyard hens directly from an urban farm (farm gate sales) with appropriate limitations and mitigation strategies.	Mid-term	Licensing - Development Services - Planning - Social Policy	Vancouver Coastal Health			●							●	●
1.24	Review and update zoning and development by-law to consider conditions and locations for the keeping of backyard hens.	Mid-term	Licensing - Development Services - Planning - Social Policy	Vancouver Coastal Health	●										
1.25	Support public education programs on backyard hens in response to community demand and interest.	Mid-term	Social Policy - Communications		●					●					●
<b>Procurement and Distribution • Mid-scale Food Distribution Actions</b>															
2.1	Conduct environmental scan to determine assets and gaps in mid-scale local and sustainable food aggregation and distribution infrastructure.	Short-term - Priority	Social Policy - Business Planning Secretariat	Vancouver Economic Commission			●	●		●	●	●			
2.2	Determine feasibility, core functions, business plan, governance, ownership structure and site for a central food hub.	Short-term - Priority	Social Policy - Business Planning Secretariat				●	●		●	●				
2.3	Determine feasibility, core functions, business plan, governance, ownership structure and site for a food business incubator.	Short-term	DTES Planning - Social Policy				●	●							
2.4	Support businesses and social enterprises involved in processing and distribution of healthy, local and sustainable food within Vancouver and connect to local agricultural producers in the region.	Short-term	Social Policy - Sustainability	Vancouver Economic Commission			●	●			●			●	

Action Number	Action	Timeline	Lead Departments	Partners	Complementary Tools, Levers and Policies										
					Community Plans	Community Service Grants	Economic Action Strategy	Greenest City Action Plan	Housing and Homeless Strategy	Healthy City Strategy*	Transportation 2040 Plan	Park Board Local Food Asset Task Force*	Metro Vancouver Food System Strategy	VCH Community Food Action Initiative	Vancouver School Board Sustainability Plan*
<b>Procurement and Distribution • Procurement Actions</b>															
2.5	Measure the percentage of local and sustainable food procured by the City and make recommendations for an appropriate local and sustainable food target.	Short-term - Priority	Purchasing Services - Sustainability Office				●	●		●	●	●	●		
2.6	Explore opportunities to increase the percentage of local and sustainable food purchased by City and school facilities as a way to support local farmers and producers.	Short-term - Priority	Purchasing Services - Sustainability Office - Social Development	Vancouver School Board			●		●	●	●			●	
2.7	Explore opportunities to increase the percentage of local and sustainable food purchased by Park facilities including community centres and concessions in parks and beaches.	Short-term - Priority	Purchasing Services - Park Board - Sustainability Office								●	●			
2.8	Examine opportunities for aggregation of local and sustainable food purchasing among neighbourhood houses, smaller community centres and childcare centres.	Short-term - Priority	Sustainability Office - Social Development	Neighbourhood House Association; Childcare centres	●		●					●		●	
<b>Procurement and Distribution • Community Kitchen Actions</b>															
2.9	Encourage installation of community kitchens or retrofit existing kitchens in new developments, social housing sites or City facilities.	Short-term	Development Services - Planning - DTES Planning - Housing - Social infrastructure	BC Housing					●			●		●	
2.10	Analyze current opportunities and challenges facing community kitchens.	Mid-term	Social Policy - Housing - Park Board	Fresh Choice Kitchens	●				●	●		●	●		
2.11	Compile an inventory of available under-utilized kitchen space in Vancouver where community kitchens could be held.	Mid-term	Social Policy - Social Infrastructure - Park Board	Fresh Choice Kitchens	●				●	●		●		●	

Action Number	Action	Timeline	Lead Departments	Partners	Complementary Tools, Levers and Policies										
					Community Plans	Community Service Grants	Economic Action Strategy	Greenest City Action Plan	Housing and Homeless Strategy	Healthy City Strategy*	Transportation 2040 Plan	Park Board Local Food Asset Task Force*	Metro Vancouver Food System Strategy	VCH Community Food Action Initiative	Vancouver School Board Sustainability Plan*
<b>Food Access • Neighbourhood Food Network Actions</b>															
3.1	Stabilize multi-year core funding for NFN Coordinators in partnership with other funders or levels of government (e.g. Vancouver Coastal Health).	Short-term - Priority	Social Policy	Vancouver Coastal Health; Other funders		●	●			●				●	
3.2	Facilitate the creation of office space to accommodate neighbourhood food network coordinators in community centres and / or neighbourhood houses.	Short-term - Priority	Social Policy - Park Board	Neighbourhood House Association	●	●				●		●		●	
3.3	Support an outreach strategy that brings together neighbourhood food networks and a broad range of individuals, diverse groups, businesses and other sectors.	Short-term	Social Policy	Neighbourhood food networks				●		●					
<b>Food Access • Farmers Market Actions</b>															
3.4	Review and update interim farmers market policy (permitting processes, permitting, fees, licensing, fresh food ratio).	Short-term - Priority	Social Policy - Development Services - Planning - Engineering - Park Board	Farmers Market operators			●			●			●	●	
3.5	Explore opportunities to support farmers markets on Park Board sites with electricity and water where appropriate.	Short-term - Priority	Park Board - Social Policy	Farmers Market operators								●			
3.6	Create long-term strategic plan for farmers markets in Vancouver (10 year vision; geographical distribution; conditions for expansion; links between larger markets and community food markets; gaps in market or food system infrastructure).	Mid-term	Social Policy - Development Services - Planning - Engineering - Park Board	Farmers Market operators			●			●	●	●	●	●	
3.7	Identify opportunities for multi-purpose structures and other infrastructure to be used for farmers markets and other community events.	Mid-term	Social Policy - Development Services - Planning - Engineering - Park Board	Farmers Market operators			●					●			
3.8	Increase the number of farmers markets in Vancouver from nine to 22 by the year 2020.	Long-term	Social Policy - Development Services - Planning - Engineering - Park Board	Farmers Market operators	●		●	●		●		●	●	●	
<b>Food Access • Community Food Market Actions</b>															
3.9	Establish community food markets as a permitted use and streamline application process.	Short-term - Priority	Social Policy - Development Services - Planning - Engineering - Park Board	Neighbourhood food networks; Vancouver Coastal Health; Farmers Market Operators	●		●			●					
3.10	Encourage integration of community food markets into Vancouver School Board programming as part of healthy food options for youth and families.	Short-term - Priority	Social Policy	Vancouver School Board						●				●	

Action Number	Action	Timeline	Lead Departments	Partners	Complementary Tools, Levers and Policies												
					Community Plans	Community Service Grants	Economic Action Strategy	Greenest City Action Plan	Housing and Homeless Strategy	Healthy City Strategy*	Transportation 2040 Plan	Park Board Local Food Asset Task Force*	Metro Vancouver Food System Strategy	VCH Community Food Action Initiative	Vancouver School Board Sustainability Plan*		
3.11	Incorporate community food markets into community centre programming.	Mid-term	Social Policy - Park Board	Neighbourhood food networks; Community food market operators; Community Centre Associations	●						●		●				
3.12	Increase the number of community food markets in Vancouver from 4 to 15 by the year 2020.	Long-term	Social Policy - Planning - Development Services - Engineering - Park Board	Neighbourhood food networks; Vancouver Coastal Health; Farmers Market Operators			●	●	●	●						●	
<b>Food Access • Healthy Food Retail Actions</b>																	
3.13	Review existing mobile food vending program as one opportunity to promote mobile green grocers.	Short-term	Social Policy - Engineering	Vancouver Street Food Vendor Association			●				●						
3.14	Test pilot programs that improve access to healthy food in neighbourhoods (e.g. healthy corner stores, pop-up grocery stores or mobile green grocers).	Mid-term	Social Policy - Planning - Development Services	Neighbourhood food networks			●				●						
<b>Food Access • Street Food Actions</b>																	
3.15	Convene regular meetings between City staff, vendors and other stakeholders (e.g. Business Improvement Associations) to identify issues and mitigate conflicts.	Short-term	Engineering - Social Policy	Business Improvement Associations; Vancouver Street Food Association			●									●	
3.16	Explore options to enable street food vending on private property.	Short-term	Planning - Development Services	Business Improvement Associations; Vancouver Street Food Association			●										
3.17	Review and provide recommendations for the mobile food vending program.	Short-term	Engineering	Business Improvement Associations; Vancouver Street Food Association			●										
3.18	Encourage street food vendors to source local and sustainable ingredients in their menus, and require vendors to use reusable, recyclable or compostable packaging.	Short-term	Engineering - Social Policy	Farmers Market Society; Vancouver Street Food Vendors Association			●				●						
3.19	Encourage street food vending as an economic development opportunity for low-income groups.	Mid-term	Engineering - Social Policy	Farmers Market Society; Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House; Kitchen Tables	●		●		●	●							

Action Number	Action	Timeline	Lead Departments	Partners	Complementary Tools, Levers and Policies										
					Community Plans	Community Service Grants	Economic Action Strategy	Greenest City Action Plan	Housing and Homeless Strategy	Healthy City Strategy*	Transportation 2040 Plan	Park Board Local Food Asset Task Force*	Metro Vancouver Food System Strategy	VCH Community Food Action Initiative	Vancouver School Board Sustainability Plan*
<b>Waste • Food Waste Actions</b>															
4.1	Expand food scraps pilot program to all single-family residential areas.	Short-term - Priority	Engineering							●	●		●		
4.2	Develop strategies to reduce food packaging in City facilities.	Short-term	Purchasing Services - Sustainability Office - Social Development	Community Centre Associations			●	●						●	
4.3	Ensure that food composting is available in City facilities, and that dishes and food packaging are reusable, recyclable or compostable.	Short-term	Sustainability - Business Planning and Services - Parks Board	Community Centre Associations				●				●		●	
4.4	Expand food scraps collection to multi-family dwellings.	Short-term	Engineering - Sustainability Office				●						●		
4.5	Explore pilot food recovery programs and initiatives to channel surplus edible food to people.	Mid-term	Social Policy	Metro Vancouver, Quest, Food Bank	●	●				●				●	
4.6	Support community composting models.	Mid-term	Engineering	Metro Vancouver, Business Improvement Associations	●	●				●				●	

Action Number	Action	Timeline	Lead Departments	Partners	Complementary Tools, Levers and Policies											
					Community Plans	Community Service Grants	Economic Action Strategy	Greenest City Action Plan	Housing and Homeless Strategy	Healthy City Strategy*	Transportation 2040 Plan	Park Board Local Food Asset Task Force*	Metro Vancouver Food System Strategy	VCH Community Food Action Initiative	Vancouver School Board Sustainability Plan*	
<b>System-Wide • System-Wide Actions</b>																
5.1	Increase access to food resources and information that supports and celebrates healthy and sustainable foods (including materials in multiple languages).	Short-term	Social Policy - Communications	Neighbourhood food networks, Farm Folk/City Folk				●					●		●	●
5.2	Strengthen alliances and partnerships with other municipalities in Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley regions on food policy.	Short-term	Social Policy - Planning	Metro Vancouver										●		
5.3	Advocate for the preservation and enhancement of the Agricultural Land Reserve to protect sustainable food production and to support local economic development	Short-term	Social Policy - Planning	Metro Vancouver				●						●		
5.4	Support the provincial government in creating a comprehensive anti-poverty program that brings attention to the links between food, health and income.	Short-term	Social Policy		●								●			
5.5	Facilitate the transition from a charitable food model to one based on principles of a just and sustainable food system.	Short-term	Social Policy	Greater Vancouver Food Bank, Neighbourhood food networks, Faith-based Groups						●					●	
5.6	Ensure that a food systems lens is applied to community planning processes and other public consultation exercises.	Short-term	Social Policy - Planning - Parks		●								●			
5.7	Create food system checklist to assist city staff in reviewing development applications, rezoning and/or community plans in new developments, parks and public spaces.	Mid-term	Social Development - Planning - Development Services		●					●			●	●		
5.8	Create toolkit to assist development applicants to incorporate food system elements in new developments.	Mid-term	Social Policy - Planning - Development Services					●								
5.9	Improve coordination among funders, stakeholders and levels of government to ensure reliable and on-going financial support of neighbourhood-based food initiatives, particularly those delivered by the neighbourhood food networks.	Mid-term	Social Policy	Vancouver Foundation, VanCity Foundation, Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver School Board		●	●						●	●	●	
5.10	Promote education and awareness about growing food in backyards, balconies, podiums, rooftops and other spaces in neighbourhoods.	Mid-term	Social Policy - Communications	City Farmer	●			●		●						



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Photo: Michael Joseph Ogaz

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