

CALGARY EATS! FOOD SYSTEM ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN STATUS/PROGRESS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform Council about the status and progress made on the Calgary EATS! Food System and Action Plan since its adoption in 2012 June. This is the first report of its kind. Data was collected in 2014 through a representative omnibus survey and from various stakeholders of the food system to measure progress towards the targets identified in the Calgary EATS! Action Plan.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the SPC on Community and Protective Services recommends that Council receive this report for information, and direct Administration to:

1. Establish a regular monitoring and reporting cycle on progress towards the Calgary EATS! Action Plan and report back in advance of each City business planning cycle to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development ;
2. Continue to support the community in implementing the Calgary EATS! Food Assessment and Action Plan;
3. Examine opportunities to include food related policies more firmly into planning policies and practice; and
4. Explore opportunities to match or offset The City's funding to support food system actions.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION /POLICY

At the 2009 November 30 Regular Meeting of Council, Council approved Notice of Motion NM2009-52, Food Policy for The City of Calgary, directing Administration to prepare a report examining The City of Calgary's role in a local food system for Calgarians. On 2010 July 19, Council directed Administration to coordinate a multi-sector/agency stakeholder group to develop a terms of reference for further defining food priorities, partnerships, funding opportunities and an action plan.

On 2011, March 21 Council received the terms of reference and adopted the recommendation that Administration complete a food system assessment and land inventory and report back to Council no later than 2012 April (CPS2011-18). On 2011 November 14, Council approved the revised Council Innovation Fund application to support the completion of the Calgary Food System Assessment & Action Plan and Calgary Community Farm Initiative (CCFI).

On 2012, June 06 Council received for information the summary of the "Calgary Eats! Food System Assessment and Action Plan for Calgary", endorsed the vision and principles of the Calgary Food System Assessment (Attachment 2), and endorsed the implementation of the recommended City of Calgary actions in collaboration with appropriate stakeholders. Council also directed Administration to return with a progress/status report to Council through the SPC on Community and Protective Services, no later than 2013 December CPS2012-0087).

On 2013, December 06 Council approved Administration's request to defer the progress/status report on the "Calgary EATS! Food System Assessment and Action Plan" to no later than December 2014 (CPS2013-0695).

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BACKGROUND

A growing number of municipalities across North America are coming to truly understand the value of local food systems. A food system in its simplest form is a network connecting food production, processing, distribution, access & preparation, consumption and food waste recovery. Currently, 64 municipalities in Canada and 200 across North America are undertaking food policy work for three major reasons:

1. Municipalities are impacted by the consequences of a failing food system (i.e. pollution, diet-related health problems, access and affordability);
2. Food systems serve as a multifunctional strategy for achieving broader municipal goals; and
3. Food systems provide significant economic development opportunities such as job creation in food production right through to food waste recovery.

Municipalities are involved with regards to strengthening economic development, community-building, enhancing the health of the environment, and addressing poverty related issues such as access to healthy food, access to food during natural disasters and providing jobs.

Municipalities and regional districts have become key players in working to improve the Canadian food system through a mix of municipal policies, programs, and business and community partnerships.

What has been demonstrated in Calgary and other cities undertaking municipal food policy work is that a resilient food system is an important economic driver, is vital to community building, and plays an integral role for the health of citizens. Between 2011 and 2012 over 360 organizations and 1400 individuals were engaged in the development of the "Calgary Eats! Food System Assessment and Action Plan" which was presented to Council in June 2012.

The Plan includes baseline data, issues, opportunities and an action plan for creating a sustainable, resilient food system for Calgary and the region. The Action Plan introduces a first suite of indicators to measure the targets set out in the plan. The current status/progress report is based on these indicators and provides a first impression on progress made in recent years. The report also contains proposed metrics. These metrics currently lack sufficient information to be reported on. However they cover important areas for which it would be important to gather information in order to provide a broader understanding of Calgary's food system.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Food is not only a basic human need, it also represents community, connection to places, jobs, culture, recreation and health.

The economic importance of food in Calgary has increased in recent years. The average Alberta family of four spends \$8,414 on food annually. This figure can be expected to be even higher in Calgary, which in a city of 1.2 million inhabitants represents a significant economic market. In 2012, consumers spent \$374 million at Alberta restaurants serving local food. Revenues from farmer's markets and farm retail in Alberta have tripled in the past decade (market value of \$878 million in 2012). The food industry is also an important employment sector in Calgary; food industry jobs are expected to increase by 19 per cent from 2010 to 2020,

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totalling 67,573 jobs. This represents an economic diversification opportunity since food manufacturing is one of Calgary's largest sub-sectors.

Food connects people; it is a community builder and supports opportunities for aging in place. Studies have shown that people have 10 times more conversations at farmer's markets than at a supermarket. In 2014, 76 per cent of Calgarians felt that purchasing local food is important, and 53 per cent grow at least some of their own food. The number of community gardens has increased from 11 in 2008 to 140 in 2013 and more than 200 in 2014. Community gardens provide a platform to integrate both newcomers to Calgary and different age groups, while empowering individuals through skill-building. All of the above strengthens people-to-people interaction, which has been identified as one of the key factors to increase community resilience during hazardous events, such as the 2013 floods.

According to the "Cost of Eating in Alberta" report published by Dietitians of Canada, Alberta Health Services and Alberta Public Health Association in 2008, a monthly household food cost of not more than 15 per cent is considered affordable. For low-income Albertans food can cost as much as 32 per cent of their monthly budget. Almost 130,000 Calgarians accessed the food bank last year of which 42 percent were children. Household food insecurity (inadequate or insecure access to food because of financial constraints) is thus a significant social and public health problem. Between 2008 and 2014 the number of Albertans accessing emergency food programs has increased by 48 per cent. Calgary as a community is faced with a double risk on this front. Whereas huge increases in food bank participation in the United States is due to the economic downturn, in Calgary the same could occur during a downturn as well as during our current boom. During June and July 2014, the Calgary Food Bank distributed an average of 475 hampers daily which is equivalent to a 10 per cent increase over the same period last year. Calgary's main food bank and others around the city are reporting increased use over the last years. The region's low vacancy rate and resulting high rents are considered one of the main drivers for this trend. With housing costs at an all time high, the residual household income for food, let alone healthy food choices, is greatly reduced.

Research on progress towards the action plan to date has involved seven of the eight Action Plan's intervention areas. Sample highlights include:

1. **Governance:** Since the endorsement of Calgary Eats! (CPS2012-0087), the Stewardship Group has transitioned into an implementation and monitoring committee with new terms of reference and a membership strategy. The group also updated its communication strategy and web presence in order to better provide resources to the public. The City of Calgary's Office of Sustainability acts as a partner and secretariat for the Calgary EATS! Stewardship Group;
2. **Regulation, Legislation and Advocacy:** Preliminary work has been undertaken to identify municipal regulations for alignment with the food vision and principles. The City's Office of Sustainability has worked with several community groups to explore recommended changes to regulation and legislation;
3. **Planning and Land Use:** The Calgary Regional Partnership has become a member of the Calgary EATS! Stewardship Group and is initiating food policy work regionally. The City of Calgary continues to support the Community Garden Program and Community

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- Orchards, while also exploring options for integrating urban agriculture into existing parks, and on underutilized lands;
4. Logistics and Transportation: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (Explore Local Initiative) and local community associations have explored opportunities for a food hub in Calgary;
 5. Economic Development: The Calgary EATS! Stewardship Group is consulting with Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development to conduct a two-year local food markets opportunities assessment for the city of Calgary;
 6. Community Programs: Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS) has joined the Calgary EATS! Stewardship Group and is providing skill-building community kitchen programs to low-income Calgarians. The Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Association's Community Food Program includes a range of programs to address food security, including their Farmers' Market, Local 301: Urban Agriculture Workshop Series, and Food Skills Cooking Program; and
 7. Education Programs: The City of Calgary and Green Calgary continue to provide education programs and campaigns on food waste diversion and composting. Calgary Horticulture Society also provides gardening education to community garden members.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

The "Calgary EATS! Food Assessment and Action Plan" was completed in response to growing citizen demand and community awareness of the value of a sustainable food system. As a "City-led, community-owned" initiative, Calgary EATS! continues to be driven by passion and engagement from community members. The Calgary EATS! Stewardship Group (formerly Calgary Food Committee) is a multi-sector stakeholder group with representatives from each element of the food system. The group was initially established to guide and direct the development of the Food Assessment and Action Plan, and now works to catalyze action towards the implementation of the Plan.

Strategic Alignment

Supporting food policy work in Calgary aligns with a number of strategic City documents. Strengthening the food system contributes to multiple social, economic and environmental goals across The City of Calgary. It aligns with The City's Triple Bottom Line Policy and has the potential to strengthen ongoing City of Calgary strategies and projects, such as The City's waste diversion strategy (80/20 by 2020), the Strong Neighbourhood Initiative, the Community Green House Gas Reductions Plan, as well as achieving policies set out by the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and the Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP). Additionally, strengthening the food system contributes to multiple social, economic, and environmental goals and plays an important role in considering smart growth, accessibility and mobility as the city's population grows.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External) section

This progress/status report represents progress towards the food system vision: "to create a sustainable and resilient food system for the Calgary region" and therefore holistically addresses the social, environmental and economic aspects of the food system.

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Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

The current progress/status report will not incur additional operating costs as The City of Calgary's responsibilities within the Action Plan were identified as part of existing allocated budgets. The recommendations mentioned above are not expected to result in additional future operating costs as they can be achieved within existing allocated budget. The only exception will be the establishing of a match funding system to support food related initiatives in the future. Depending on the outcome of the exploratory phase appropriate budget adjustments will be brought forward for the mid-term budget allocation review. Required budget will be limited, however. First estimations resulted in a required City contribution of approximately \$10,000 – \$15,000 annually that would be matched to 100% by the community.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

The current progress/status report will not incur a capital cost.

Risk Assessment

Calgary's food system is vulnerable to a wide range of disruptions such as extreme weather events, fuel prices, loss of farmland, market volatility etc. Access to food and healthy food is increasingly an issue for the city and social service providers as the participation at local food banks is increasing. Food access is a business challenge and opportunity. There is an opportunity for The City to work with community partners to increase the resilience of the food system as this benefits individual health, community connections, environmental stewardship, and local economic activity, which contributes to our overall resiliency as a city.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

Despite initial progress, many areas in the "Calgary EATS! Food Assessment and Action Plan" require further action and continued commitment from The City to enable and support community in its desire to further a resilient and sustainable food system in Calgary and region, and to achieve the vision and principles approved by Council.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Calgary EATS! Food System Assessment and Action Plan Progress/Status Report.
2. Calgary Food System Assessment Vision & Principles.