

CalgaryEATS! Progress Report 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the CalgaryEATS! Food Action Plan and the key initiatives The City has undertaken since the last progress report to Council in 2014. The City of Calgary Food Action Plan – CalgaryEATS! is a shared plan between The City of Calgary and community partners and contains both City-led actions and community-led actions. The Food Action Plan goals focus on increasing urban and regional food production and consumption, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food for all Calgarians, and ensuring a secure supply of food for all Calgarians. The Food Action Plan vision is to create a sustainable and resilient food system for Calgary and region so that every Calgarian has access to local, healthy and environmentally friendly food. The Food Action Plan was endorsed by Council in 2012 and the 17 City-led actions as well as Calgary’s overall food system environment have served to guide and prioritize the City-led portfolio of work. Initiatives focus on The City’s role as an enabler and/or supporter and The City’s ability to contribute to long term quality of life for Calgarians.

The attached CalgaryEATS! Progress Report 2017 (Attachment 1) provides an overview of all the City-led and community-led Food Action Plan initiatives currently underway.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the SPC on Community and Protective Services recommends that Council receive this report for information.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES, 2017 DECEMBER 06:

That the Administration Recommendation contained in Report CPS2017-1128 be approved.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY On 2015, July 27 Council received for information the ongoing reporting plan for the Calgary EATS! Food System Assessment and Action Plan. Council then directed Administration to “Return to Council through the SPC on Community & Protective Services no later than December 2017 and every four years thereafter in advance of the business planning cycle with a progress report that reflects both The City of Calgary and community’s actions with respect to the Calgary EATS! Food System and Action Plan; and to align the Calgary EATS! Progress Report with City of Calgary Results Based Accountability practices, as they develop before 2017” (CPS2015-0535).

On 2014, December 15 Council received for information the first progress/status report. Council then directed Administration to “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 Community and Protective Services, no later than 2015 July” (CPS2014-0732).

On 2013, December 06 Council approved “Administration’s request to defer the report on Calgary Eats! Food System Assessment and Action Plan Progress/Status Report to no later than 2014 December” (CPS2013-0695).

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On 2012, June 25 Council received “for information ‘Calgary EATS!’ Summary of a Food System Assessment and Action Plan for Calgary and Calgary Food System Assessment and Action Plan Engagement Process Summary; Endorse the vision and principles of the Calgary Food System Assessment; Endorse the implementation of the recommended City of Calgary actions in collaboration with appropriate stakeholders; and Direct 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 2011, March 21 Council directed “Administration to work with the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) to complete the food system assessment” (CPS2011-18).

At the 2010 July 19, Regular Meeting of Council, 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” (CPS2010-54).

BACKGROUND

Since 2009 The City of Calgary and its community partners have pursued efforts to enable and support a sustainable and resilient food system in Calgary. With direction from City Council, a city-wide food system assessment and a gap analysis were completed in 2010, the results of which informed the CalgaryEATS! Food Action Plan. The Food Action Plan was endorsed by City Council in 2012 and is a shared plan between The City of Calgary and community partners with both City-led actions and community-led actions. City-led initiatives contribute towards the Food Action Plan vision of providing all Calgarians with access to local, healthy and a secure supply of food, while ensuring the food system is environmentally sustainable and supporting economic development. There are 17 City-led actions that fall under the following categories:

- Regulation, Legislation and Advocacy
- Planning and Land Use
- Logistics and Transportation
- Environment
- Economic Development
- Community Programs
- Education Programs
- Governance

The role of The City is fundamental as an enabler and supporter and hence action implementation is most practical in areas that fall under its direct influence. Implementation is achieved through policy, pilot projects and program development.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Calgary’s Food System: Context and Emerging Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

Calgary’s population has grown by 126,112 since 2012. As Calgary continues to grow, demand for food production, food processing, grocery stores, restaurants, specialty markets, farmers’

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markets, and commercial kitchens grows as well. This in turn creates jobs and helps build strong local businesses and attractive opportunities for both small business entrepreneurs and larger agribusiness investment in our city. Agribusiness is the term used to describe the diverse agricultural economic activities involved in the farm to fork value chain. Calgary is already home to several international agribusiness corporations and Calgary Economic Development is working to attract more. Agribusiness has been identified as a key focus area in *Building on Our Energy; An Economic Strategy for Calgary* (November 2014). The agriculture and agri-food sector is a major element of Calgary's food system, contributing to the production of food that Calgarians eat while also providing key employment and economic growth opportunities through domestic sale and export and value-added processing. In 2016, Alberta's food and beverage processing sales totaled a record \$14.6 billion and the sector employed more than 22,400 Albertans, while small scale local food sales in direct-to-consumer channels (farmers' markets, restaurants and retail) have more than doubled since 2008 and are expected to exceed \$1.2 billion in 2017. Calgary has experienced strong growth in beverage manufacturing, namely breweries and distilleries, and Calgary Economic Development has played a pivotal role in connecting entrepreneurs with financial investors which has helped to advance the level of interest in commercial food system activities in Calgary.

Greater attention is now being paid to the production of food within the urban area. Existing methods of growing food have improved and new methods of growing food in urban areas have emerged. New models of growing food indoors include aquaponics, aquaculture and vertical farming and there is increased interest from the business community in indoor food production that can happen 12 months of the year. These methods of growing food are well suited to the urban environment and support increased business opportunities, employment, economic activity and diversification as well as local food production.

These emerging economic opportunities for both small and large-scale food system activities create an opportunity to leverage community trends to advance the City-led Food Action Plan actions for greatest collective impact.

Challenges

Finding vacant land that is affordable and suitable for food production can be a challenge and this has led to increased public interest in accessing vacant public land for commercial food production activities. Over the past two years, The City of Calgary received 17 requests for information related to permitting and land use for urban agriculture or food production, or to lease city-owned vacant land.

Despite the growth in some areas of the food system, there are gaps and vulnerabilities in other areas. Several issues influence Calgary's move forward towards food security and a sustainable, resilient food system. The economic downturn has strained families that rely on precarious work, and low wages make nutritious food hard to obtain. Loss of employment has put families that were previously economically stable at risk as well. Because food insecurity results from a household's inability to access food for financial reasons, the loss of employment for many Calgarians has meant that more Calgary families than ever are food insecure. Visits to The Calgary Food Bank have increased by more than 40,000 over a three-year period. The most recent data from 2014 show eleven percent of Calgarians are food insecure. Rising food prices compound the issue. The Nutritious Food Basket is a tool used to monitor the cost and affordability of healthy eating in Canada. Food prices have continued to rise with the cost of a Nutritious Food Basket increasing by more than \$300/month over a three-year period.

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Calgarians, especially in many low-income communities, need better access to affordable, healthy food.

Community agencies are responding to household food insecurity through meal provision, education programs, summer food assistance for kids, and food recovery and re-distribution. The Calgary Food Bank has also expanded its service and now offers Food Bank Depots in communities most in need, reducing the need for travel to The Food Bank to obtain food hampers and other services. Community Associations have increased food skill programming and emergency food distribution services, and Calgary Neighbourhoods Community Social Workers are working with residents on food insecurity in 20 priority communities. The table below highlights some changes in community support statistics since the last CalgaryEATS! Progress Report in 2014.

Household Food Insecurity in Calgary		
	2014	2017
Cost of a Nutritious Food Basket	\$784/month (family of 4)	\$1089.54/month (family of 4)
Food Bank Client Visits	129,948	170,093 (2016)
Brown Bagging for Kids	2,200 lunches/day	3,200 lunches/day
I Can for Kids (formed 2015)	N/A	36,000 meal kits/summer

Other Community-led Initiatives

Citizen interest in community gardens, farmers' markets, urban farms, beekeeping and community food projects continues to increase. Many communities offer food skill building programs, breakfast and lunch programs, community meals and collective kitchen programs. At the same time, there is evidence of a growing interest in the quality, freshness, provenance, and price of food, and increasing demand for food that is locally produced and seasonal.

Agriculture and food has inspired the proposal for a new residential neighbourhood in Southeast Calgary based on the concept of Agricultural Urbanism. Agricultural Urbanism integrates urban planning and agriculture into community design. The new community plan for Rangeview integrates shared food production sites (both indoor and outdoor), community food gardens, greenhouses, a community kitchen and a market square throughout the community. It will be one of the first of its kind in Canada.

There are many organizations that are actively engaging citizens on a wide range of food system activities, and many notable advances have been made in Calgary's food system assets since 2012 when the CalgaryEATS! Food System Assessment was completed. The table below `Food System Assets` provides some examples of food system growth over the last five years.

Food and the food system is increasingly becoming part of the fabric of our city and this has highlighted the need for The City to play a greater role in enabling and supporting food system activities through land use planning, program development and project incubation.

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Select Food System Assets	2012	2017
Community Gardens	111	149
Community Orchards	4	8
Urban Farms	0	2
Farmers` Markets	9	12
Breweries	5	20
Food Processors	85	104
Hunger Relief Services	31	46

City-led Initiatives: Progress Since 2014

Significant progress has been made in furthering City-led actions in the food system since the last progress report in 2014. To maximize a positive impact for the community, efforts have been focused in areas where The City plays a role as an enabler of activity or a supporter. Attachment 1, CalgaryEATS! Progress Report 2017, provides more detailed updates on all City-led initiatives and how each initiative contributes to increasing urban and regional food production and consumption, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food for all Calgarians, and ensuring a secure supply of food for all Calgarians. The following are key initiatives where significant progress has been made since 2014:

1. Land Use Bylaw Amendments for Food Production, Processing and Distribution

Over the past year, a Land Use Bylaw review identified opportunities to support urban food production. In September 2017, City Council adopted a first set of proposed amendments that included a new “food production” use. Indoor food production is a priority area of interest for stakeholders and the amendments to the Land Use Bylaw are formative to providing increased economic opportunities for both small-scale urban growers and large agribusinesses. The amendments provide the opportunity for more commercial local food production to occur, moving the city closer to achieving the Food Action Plan vision of producing more local food and supporting the Council Priority of ‘A Prosperous Economy’.

Since the introduction of the “food production” use, permits are pending for two indoor aquaponics food production businesses and several small scale indoor modular farms are in the process of getting established. Work continues on how to accommodate more food system activities in the Land Use Bylaw to support emerging economic development opportunities in the food sector.

2. Urban Agriculture Project

New opportunities for outdoor urban agriculture and indoor food production are emerging that require City support and coordination. Many of the rules potentially governing urban food production have yet to be established, and there are multiple models of food production that require different approvals. This poses challenges for Calgary businesses that need information and direction on land use approvals, licenses and regulations.

This project will develop a coordinated approach to enabling and supporting urban agriculture and food production by facilitating access to City-owned land for agriculture and food production, and developing an information resource to help the public and urban food producers

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understand the requirements for commercial urban food production. This will ensure that urban farm businesses thrive and will help increase local food production and availability. This project contributes to 'A Healthy and Green City' and 'A City of Inspiring Neighbourhoods' and 'A Prosperous Economy'.

3. Fresh Food Markets at Transit Stations

The goal of this project is to increase access to healthy affordable food in neighbourhoods underserved by healthy food retailers. Using the food desert mapping from the CalgaryEATS! Food System Assessment, four transit stations were selected for fresh food markets. The markets launched in September 2017 and operated two days a week in peak commute times at alternating stations. Placing fresh food market stands at transit stations gives pedestrians and public transit riders easy access to fresh retail food markets along transit routes, increasing overall access to fresh healthy food for all Calgarians. The markets also added vibrancy to the transit stations by encouraging citizens to stop, browse and engage with neighbours. This project contributes to 'A Healthy and Green City' and 'A City of Inspiring Neighbourhoods'.

4. Neighbourhood Food Plans

Income related household food insecurity exists in Calgary. Some residents are relying on hunger relief agencies for their food needs and the cost of a Nutritious Food Basket continues to increase. In 2016 and 2017, Calgary Neighbourhoods Community Social Workers partnered with residents and community stakeholders in 20 priority neighbourhoods to assess the local social issues, needs, conditions, concerns and aspirations of residents and stakeholders. Twenty local initiatives that focus on increasing food security were implemented in neighbourhoods including: school lunch and breakfast programs, community meals, collective kitchens, community gardens, coordination of good food boxes, advocating for satellite food depots, and cooking programs. This initiative responds to the growing need for increased food security for vulnerable populations in some Calgary communities and will contribute to ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food for all Calgarians. This project contributes to 'A Healthy and Green City' and 'A City of Inspiring Neighbourhoods'.

5. Boulevard Garden Guidelines

'Boulevard' is the name given to the strip of City-owned land between a property and the street or the sidewalk and the street. Boulevards provide opportunities to grow food, particularly in high density neighbourhoods with multi-unit dwellings that lack spaces for growing food. Calgarians have indicated interest in boulevard gardens, seeing benefits for communities with multi-unit dwellings. A new set of Boulevard Garden Guidelines is in development that will clearly define where gardens can occur and other considerations such as height restrictions for plants and structures as well as setbacks for pedestrians and parked vehicles will be published on Calgary.ca in early 2018 in time for the next growing season. The guidelines will support more opportunities for local food production by clarifying the rules for boulevard gardens. This project contributes to 'A Healthy and Green City' and 'A City of Inspiring Neighbourhoods'.

6. Food and Land Use Planning

Land use planning can play a pivotal role in ensuring the availability of local food at the neighbourhood level. Food access relies on the incorporation of food production and processing, related infrastructure, and food distribution into land use planning. Supporting this, work has included a comprehensive review of the Developed Areas Guidebook; a review of the Section23 Rangeview Outline Plan; adding a food system lens in the Sustainability Appraisal

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Tool; and a review the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) for policy alignment and gaps in supporting the Food Action Plan vision. Ongoing work in food and land use planning aligns with the vision of `A Healthy and Green City` and `A City of Inspiring Neighbourhoods`.

A number of additional ongoing City-led cross-corporate initiatives and community-led initiatives contribute to the implementation of CalgaryEATS! Food Action Plan and achieving the vision of a sustainable and resilient food system for Calgary. Please see Attachment 1 for a complete overview.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Since 2012, The Calgary Food Action Plan has served as important guidance for priority setting in enabling and supporting a sustainable and resilient food system in Calgary. City-led initiatives contribute towards the Food Action Plan vision of providing all Calgarians with access to local, healthy and a secure supply of food, while ensuring the food system is environmentally sustainable and supporting economic development. Work will continue on the key City-led initiatives identified in this report, with a focus on The City`s role as enabler and its ability to contribute to long term quality of life for Calgarians.

As the city continues to grow and change, food system priorities in the broader community also change. The Food Action Plan priorities will need to evolve in order to respond to new and emerging opportunities in Calgary`s food system. To remain relevant, a portfolio analysis will be undertaken to acknowledge the wide range of food-related actions currently underway at The City, as well as to consider the broader food system environment in the community. A portfolio analysis will also identify opportunities for greater connections to other corporate programs that have been initiated since the Food Action Plan was developed in 2012 such as Resilient Calgary. This will ensure that The City continues to play an effective role as an enabler and supporter.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

The CalgaryEATS! Food System Assessment and Action Plan was completed in response to growing citizen demand and community awareness of the value of a sustainable and resilient food system. The City of Calgary values its community partners and works closely with them in achieving the vision of the Food Action Plan. With increasing citizen and economic interest in food system activities, several new community groups have formed and are working in specific food system areas to activate businesses and projects. Community partnerships have expanded and now include leaders from across Calgary`s civic and community organizations, businesses, academic institutions and government agencies.

Citizens were engaged over an 18-month period starting in 2015 through open houses and online surveys to inform the Land Use Bylaw amendments for food production, processing and distribution. Information compiled also informed work on other actions such as the Boulevard Garden Guidelines and the Urban Agriculture Project.

Communication of key initiatives is done through a new web-based information source on Calgary.ca. Information on the Food Action Plan, current projects, and information on growing food for personal use or commercial sale, buying food and emergency food sources are now available to citizens.

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Strategic Alignment

The CalgaryEATS! Food Action Plan aligns with a number of strategic City documents such as the MDP and the 2020 Sustainability Direction. Additionally, the Food Action Plan advances Council Priorities: A Healthy and Green City, A City of Inspiring Neighbourhoods, and A Prosperous Economy.

The MDP references the food system eight times in six policy objectives. Urban food production and distribution are reflected in the complete communities, strong residential neighborhoods and green infrastructure objectives while the economic principles of the MDP promote building a vibrant economy that attracts business investment.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

The Food Action Plan is based on six principles that support the vision of a sustainable and resilient food system: Local, Accessible, Secure Supply, Environmentally Sustainable, Healthy, and Economic Development. Goals focus on increasing urban and regional food production and consumption, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food for all Calgarians, and ensuring a secure supply of food for all Calgarians. The specific actions within the Food Action Plan are guided by these principles and goals, and outcomes often produce interrelated benefits for the community that include greater access to a healthy food, community economic development, social inclusion, and green infrastructure benefits.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

The current progress report will not incur any additional operating costs as The City of Calgary's responsibilities within the Food Action Plan were identified as part of existing allocated budgets. The implementation of the Food Action Plan is not expected to result in any additional future operating costs.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

Implementation of the Food Action Plan will not incur a capital cost.

Risk Assessment

The risk of progress reporting not occurring is the reduced ability for Council and Administration to understand the successes of and challenges encountered by the Food Action Plan work. Council would not receive the information necessary to continue to support, provide direction and make decisions on the Food Action Plan work in the context of the broader food system environment and corporate objectives.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

Provide this report as an update to Council on the implementation of key City-led initiatives from the Food Action Plan and share highlights of community-led initiatives.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Attachment 1 – CalgaryEATS! Food Action Plan Progress Report 2017
2. Attachment 2 – CalgaryEATS! Food System Assessment and Action Plan Summary
3. Attachment 3 – Letters of Support