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Food Forward:

A Food System Strategy for Metro Vancouver (2026 – 2036)

December 2025 DRAFT

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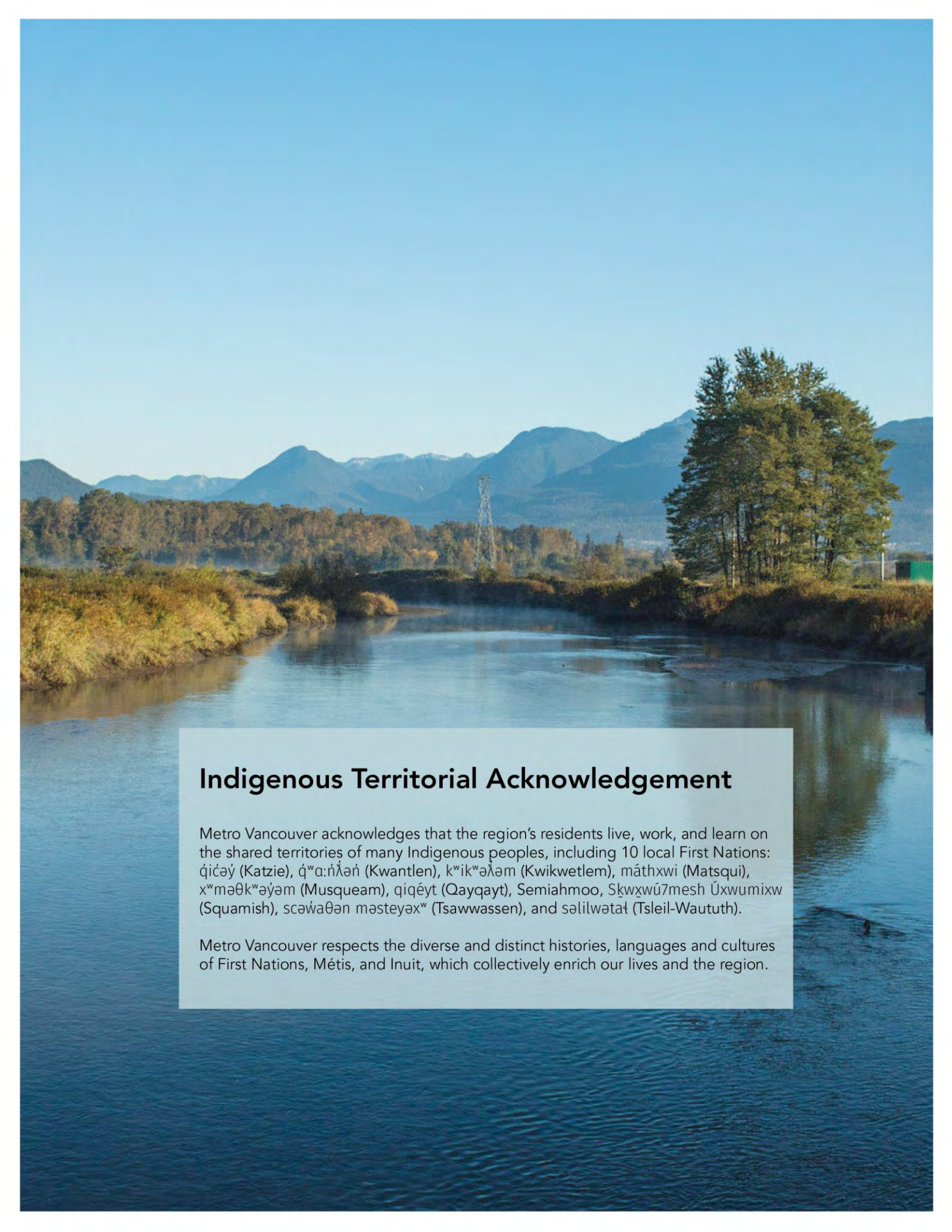
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Food Forward: A Food System Strategy for Metro Vancouver (2026 – 2036) is an updated version of the first *Regional Food System Strategy* originally endorsed by the MVRD Board in 2011. This update was supported by input and feedback contributed from a wide range of organizations and individuals including those representing producers, processors, distributors, retailers, households, health authorities, and those working with food packaging and waste. Input was also received from local First Nations, local and provincial government and Metro Vancouver staff as well as a Project Advisory Committee and the Metro Vancouver Agricultural Advisory Committee.

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Preparation of *Food Forward* was also made possible from the support and expertise of:





Indigenous Territorial Acknowledgement

Metro Vancouver acknowledges that the region's residents live, work, and learn on the shared territories of many Indigenous peoples, including 10 local First Nations: ḡíçə́y (Katzie), ḡʷɑ:ḡłəḡ (Kwantlen), kʷíkʷəłəm (Kwikwetlem), máthxwi (Matsqui), xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam), qíqéyt (Qayqayt), Semiahmoo, Skwxwú7mesh Ḳxwumixw (Squamish), scə́waθən məsteyəxʷ (Tsawwassen), and sə́lilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh).

Metro Vancouver respects the diverse and distinct histories, languages and cultures of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, which collectively enrich our lives and the region.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Metro Vancouver's first *Regional Food System Strategy* (RFSS) was completed in 2011 and was a first step in creating a collaborative approach to supporting a vision of a sustainable, resilient, and healthy food system and to working toward several desired outcomes including:

- * increasing actively farmed land
- * improving regional food security overall
- * reducing energy use in the food system; and
- * promoting community and regional economic development.

While endorsement of the RFSS by the MVRD Board in 2011 was a positive and beneficial step in supporting the health of the food system in this region, an update was necessary to ensure the Strategy remains relevant and that previously unaddressed issues, as well as newly identified areas of concern, are recognized, considered, and addressed.

Food Forward, the updated Regional Food System Strategy, acknowledges that food system challenges and recommended solutions are ever-changing and that on-going adjustments are crucial to ensuring the needs of all components of a food system, including the residents and businesses that rely on it and the natural systems affected by it, are being met. To that end, *Food Forward* is not a final product but rather a snapshot in time along a dynamic journey of continuous improvement.

THE CHALLENGE – WHY IT MATTERS

When the first *Regional Food System Strategy* was endorsed by the MVRD Board in 2011, there was “renewed interest in growing food, preparing healthy meals, buying local foods, and working with others to provide equitable access to nutritious food in our communities”. Almost 15 years later, these same issues are still top of mind, but they are issues

that are occurring within a world under significant geopolitical, economic and climate-related shifts, requiring food system structures to pivot, adjust and recalibrate forms, functions and processes. Given that food systems are made up of components operating independently within a larger structure, these required shifts will need to be self-coordinated based on mutually agreed upon participation by all parties.

THE RESPONSE – ACTIONS BEING TAKEN (by whom)

The updated Strategy, *Food Forward: A Food System Strategy for Metro Vancouver*, takes a more strategic approach focusing on how Metro Vancouver can contribute to the bigger vision of supporting a resilient, equitable, regenerative, circular and healthy food system. The focus of the Strategy is on specific challenges and recommended targeted actions. *Food Forward* focuses on identifying smaller parts of the whole that are easier to focus on, easier to fund, and easier to monitor and measure to determine what successes can be realized and what gaps need to be prioritized moving forward.

VISION

THE SEEDS OF CHANGE: TOP PRIORITY ACTIONS

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PERFORMANCE MONITORING

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SEEDS OF CHANGE: TOP PRIORITY ACTIONS

- * **PRIORITY ACTION - Agricultural Land Production Guide:** Working with member jurisdictions and the BC Government, develop a Bring Agricultural Land into Production Guide to support long-term use and viability of the remaining supply of agriculture land in the region.
- * **PRIORITY ACTION - Soil Tracking:** Work with member jurisdictions and the BC Government to develop a pilot soil tracking program for agricultural lands across the region.
- * **PRIORITY ACTION - Agricultural Impact Assessment:** Working with member jurisdictions and the BC Government, develop an agriculture impact assessment decision-making tool for development adjacent to land within the Agricultural Land Reserve.
- * **PRIORITY ACTION - Recoverable Food:** Conduct regional-level analysis on the return on investment, production costs and logistical and administrative requirements that would support a private or non-profit run region-serving recovered food and imperfect food market.
- * **PRIORITY ACTION - Food Alliance:** Convene a regional Food Alliance comprised of food sector representatives (e.g., farmers, processors, food rescuers, hospitality, grocers, haulers, etc.) to develop sector-led actions and reporting mechanisms to support transitioning to a regional circular food system.
- * **PRIORITY ACTION - Food System Clusters:** Work with local and Provincial governments and the private sector, deep dive into how the Metro Vancouver region can position itself as a super cluster of mutually-supportive food businesses to support a circular food system and reduce food system disruptions.
- * **PRIORITY ACTION - Emergency Preparedness:** Host a regional Emergency Food Preparedness forum between Metro Vancouver, the BC Government, and member jurisdictions to strategize on incorporating emergency food system planning directly into emergency preparedness plans.
- * **PRIORITY ACTION - Food Alliance:** Convene a regional Food Alliance comprised of non-profit food recovery and food assistance providers to identify specific challenges requiring region-wide cross-sector collaboration. Develop reporting mechanisms to gauge achievement.
- * **PRIORITY ACTION - Regional Parks:** In line with Strategy 3 of the *Regional Parks Plan* (2022) determine how regional parks may play a role in food sovereignty for local First Nations.
- * **PRIORITY ACTION - Food Flows:** Update *Food Flows* analysis to map how food moves through the region and expand its scope to consider climate vulnerabilities, natural hazards, and inter-regional dependencies (e.g., for food hubs and collective cold storage locations).

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there are several large agricultural fields. One field is divided into sections with different colored covers (blue, grey, and brown). To the left, there are farm buildings, including a large white barn and a smaller blue-roofed structure. In the middle ground, there are more fields, some with rows of crops, and a cluster of trees. The background is a dense forest under a clear blue sky.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Existing Metro Vancouver Regional Food System

Food System Structure

Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

FOOD SYSTEM STRUCTURE

A food system typically refers to all the processes involved in keeping us fed: from growing and harvesting food to processing, packaging, transporting, distributing, preparing, marketing, and consumption. It also includes the management of wasted food, packaging waste and the recovery of nutrients.

Food systems operate within and are influenced by the cultural, social, economic and environmental context within which they are situated. Metro Vancouver's food system reflects the Indigenous Peoples of the region as well as the subsequent waves of immigration which together have created the agricultural structure currently in use today. The places food is grown, purchased and consumed reflect the way neighbourhoods and municipalities have developed and continue to evolve within the region. At the same time, the structure of our regional food system is highly influenced by economic and social forces established at the provincial, national and global levels, creating a complex and dynamic structure of independent, yet fully integrated functions and processes. Figure 1.

Figure 1: Food System Structure



Decisions made within the food supply chain are primarily guided by market forces and decisions made to maximize returns or remain within budget allocations. Food is an essential good, necessitating all levels of government assuming roles to address issues not remedied by market forces. These include issues such as inequities in food access, loss of prime farmland, food safety regulations, and degradation of fish habitat. Government roles are also supplemented by other groups that influence the food system, for example, commodity groups, non-government organizations, community groups, educational institutions and health authorities.

Stronger connections between and among the food sector, levels of government, educational institutions, community organizations and those individuals actively engaged in the regional food system will enhance this region's ability to build capacity within and amongst the food sectors to strengthen and increase the resilience and robustness of Metro Vancouver's regional food system.

Terms and acronyms used throughout Food Forward to help define and clarify the different elements of a food system are provided in Appendix A.



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RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Metro Vancouver commits to continuing to build and strengthen respectful and reciprocal relationships with local First Nations. Metro Vancouver's projects, plans, and initiatives take place in First Nations territories, and have the potential to impact First Nations interests and priorities. Indigenous Knowledge and ways of knowing shared through engagement with First Nations enrich our projects and benefit the greater Metro Vancouver region.

The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, passed by the British Columbia Legislative Assembly in 2019, made B.C. the first jurisdiction in Canada to enshrine the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into law. Under this legislation, and working with Indigenous People across the province, a five-year action plan outlining significant actions the Province will undertake in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples through to 2027 was developed.

Embedded in that action plan are goals specific to supporting healthy and meaningful connections to Indigenous food systems, including:

- * Access to abundant and healthy traditional foods;
- * Peaceful enjoyment of harvesting rights; and
- * Cultural, social, environmental and economic well-being.

Over the past 15 years, the *Regional Food System Strategy* has shaped regional policy, supported food-related projects, and provided direction to member jurisdictions to prepare local plans and strategies that support local food production and local food security. The Strategy acknowledges that many First Nations are involved in economic development planning for their communities and people, including through fisheries, harvesting of plants, berries and other traditional resources, and, in some cases, agriculture.

Beyond recognizing the on-going and considerable work led by Indigenous communities across the region to increase food security, increase access to local and traditional food, and, through food, enhance well-being, *Food Forward* acknowledges that connecting the needs of Indigenous Peoples to the regional food system in a meaningful way requires establishing connections with local First Nations communities and respecting their diverse cultures. Metro Vancouver also acknowledges the Indigenous Food Sovereignty Insights learned during the preparation of *Food Forward*.

Indigenous Peoples across the Metro Vancouver region define food sovereignty according to their individual community needs and unique relationship with the natural environment. To create a space to expand our collective knowledge and understanding about Indigenous culture and ways of being, some insights about the intersection of food and Indigenous communities are shared here. These insights allow for a deeper understanding which in turn creates opportunities to engage with Indigenous communities to identify ways in which Indigenous food security, sovereignty and food practices can be preserved. [Add REF](#)

Self-sustainability is a deeply rooted value in Indigenous cultures. Indigenous food sovereignty is a relatively new term to describe the goal of continuing to be grounded in that knowledge in the context of systemic inequalities faced today by Indigenous Peoples.

Food is a gift from the Creator: it is medicine, a teacher, and a relative.

Food sovereignty is based on self-determination and being able to respond to Indigenous needs for healthy, culturally appropriate Indigenous foods – and to make decisions over the amount and quality of food hunted, fished, gathered, grown and eaten.

Food sovereignty involves community action and maintaining traditional harvesting practices that have been passed down for generations, which serve as a foundation for shaping and influencing policies grounded in practical experience.

Each Indigenous community has its own unique historic, traditional, social, cultural and medicinal values and practices when it comes to food.

Self-determination is key for Indigenous communities to continue participating in cultural harvesting strategies on individual, family, community and regional

Food sovereignty involves protecting the sacred relationship that Indigenous food systems hold within Indigenous communities; including respect for the spiritual dimensions of food which enables human life.

PART TWO: ROLES

Roles in Advancing a Regional Food System

Setting the Stage

Vision, Guiding Principles, Goals

Metro Vancouver's Food System Roles

Other Jurisdiction's Food System Roles



SETTING THE STAGE

Metro Vancouver is a federation of 21 municipalities, one electoral area, and one treaty First Nation that collaboratively plans for and delivers regional-scale services. Metro Vancouver provides core utility services including drinking water, sewage treatment, and solid waste management, and provides regional services like regional parks, affordable housing, regional land use planning, and air quality and climate action that help keep the region one of the most livable in the world.

The food system that supports the Metro Vancouver region is a significant contributor to the regional economy and provides a wide range of food and agricultural products for residents, visitors, businesses and export markets. As the backbone to the regional food system, agricultural land provides the basis for producing food and agricultural products and provides an aesthetic landscape, wildlife habitat, clean air, carbon sequestration and flood management. The future of agricultural land and the production it supports is currently at a vital crossroads in the region, as it continues to face several significant challenges such as:

- * Continuing loss of and/or conversion of agricultural land, even within the Agricultural Land Reserve
- * Increasing demand to accommodate urban uses on agricultural land, particularly those that generate a higher 'rate of investment'
- * Increasing land prices, land speculation, and holding land for future urban development
- * Lack of a next generation of farmers
- * Increasing need to rely on importing food
- * Increasingly unviable agricultural sector from an economic perspective
- * Increasing and steady decline in small-scale farming

Agricultural lands are under considerable threat to accommodate all other uses in the region that are also looking for land, including residential, commercial and industrial development, but also including parks, recreation, utilities and transportation and road expansion. Agricultural operations are also increasingly challenged to run viable business operations as input and operational costs continue to increase, land prices outpace what can be recovered through returns on investment, and international markets and geo-political decisions affect bottom line profits. These economic challenges, combined with the need to adapt to changing climate challenges, place considerable pressure on the regional food system to continue to support the residents and businesses that rely on it.



VISION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES and GOALS

Preparing *Food Forward* involved a multi-year, multi-phase engagement process whereby individual contributors provided input and recommendations resulting in the creation of a regional food system vision, guiding principles and goals. Overall, engagement contributed to Metro Vancouver's understanding of the complexity of the regional food system in this region and highlighted the inter-dependent and collaborative efforts necessary to achieve a functioning food system (Appendix B). An overall Vision for a regional food system was established from this work, as well as Guiding Principles and Goals, that when applied collectively provide a framework for all food system sectors to utilize to achieve the broader Vision. Additionally, *Food Forward* also highlights a Vision for how Metro Vancouver will be able to contribute to the larger regional food system.

REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM VISION

THE METRO VANCOUVER REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM IS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF RESILIENCE AND CIRCULARITY, IS REGENERATIVE AND EQUITABLE, AND CONTRIBUTES TO THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, AND NATURAL SYSTEMS.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- * EMBRACE CIRCULARITY as the foundation for overall decision-making
- * IMPROVE WELL-BEING of individuals and vulnerable groups
- * Transition to REGENERATIVE production and RENEWABLE and REUSABLE resources
- * Expand ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
- * Create a RESILIENT AND ADAPTABLE food system
- * Actively support DIVERSIFICATION
- * Build COMMUNITY CAPACITY
- * Enhance the region's SOCIAL CAPITAL THROUGH FOOD

GOALS

- * INCREASE FARMLAND PRODUCTION and regional processing, storage, and distribution infrastructure to reduce regional vulnerability.
- * SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL CIRCULAR FOOD SYSTEM that reduces waste, recovers resources, and keeps materials in use to lower climate impacts and build resilience.
- * SUPPORT A VIABLE FOOD SECTOR that is more financially viable and supports a living wage.
- * DEEPEN INDIGENOUS RELATIONSHIPS to support more resilient food systems across all communities within Metro Vancouver
- * SUPPORT FOOD CHOICE AND ACCESS of healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food.

FOOD FORWARD VISION

METRO VANCOUVER CONTRIBUTES TOWARD THE *REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM VISION* THROUGH ITS ONGOING ROLE OF REGIONAL DATA PROVISION, ADVOCACY, REGIONAL WATER, SEWER AND PARKS PROVISION, AND REGIONAL LAND USE DECISION-MAKING.

METRO VANCOUVER'S ROLE

Metro Vancouver is one of many individual sectors that comprise the complete food system within this region. Every sector is a vital contributor to the overall food system, fulfilling individual roles that, without which, access to food for all residents would be significantly disrupted. Stronger connections between and among these food sectors, including government, educational institutions, and community organizations, as well as active individuals, is a necessity for the enhancement, capacity building and long-term viability and health of the regional food system.

The regional food system is a complex, dynamic, multi-jurisdictional, multi-sector economic and societal function that is regularly impacted by local, regional, provincial, national and international regulations, decision making and events. Metro Vancouver plays a pivotal role in supporting the function of this region's complete food system and its regional-level challenges by providing a forum for collaboration and creating opportunities for dialogue and engagement as a bridge between and across multiple sectors.



Metro Vancouver's work also helps to increase the capacity of member jurisdictions and creates a venue where the multiple sectors comprising the local food system can convene to discuss complex topics. Metro Vancouver is also a direct supplier of drinking water and manages solid waste, which are two significant components to a functioning and healthy food system. Additionally, Metro Vancouver regional parks, housing services, climate and air quality and regional planning, all play a role in supporting a healthy and resilient regional food system.

Metro Vancouver directly affects individual components of the food system through its plans, strategies, implementation guidelines and bylaws. For example, *Metro 2050*, the regional growth strategy focuses on land use policy to guide future development of the region and contains policies that protect the region's agricultural land base and improve the economic viability of farming while the *Solid Waste Management Plan* contains a number of strategies and actions designed to minimize waste in the region through recycling, reuse and the recovery of materials and energy, including reducing wasted food and packaging waste.

FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR ROLES

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Federal Government authority for food rests primarily in agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and health services. **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)** focuses on international and inter-provincial trade and commerce of agricultural products, farm income stabilization, agricultural research and development, and the regulation of animals and plants. Notable programs supported through AAFC include:

- * AgPal
- * AgriInsurance Program
- * Agriculture Clean Tech Program
- * Canadian Soil Information Service
- * Drought Watch
- * Indigenous Pathfinder Service
- * Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership
- * Business Risk Management Program

The **Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)** is responsible for safe and sustainable food production, including monitoring farm animal health, on-farm and processing facility food product testing for biological, chemical or physical contamination, enforcing Federal food safety regulations, responding to food safety emergencies (e.g., Bird Flu response), testing products for chemical residues and exporting / importing requirements, and protecting Canada's plant resource base from pest and disease incursions.

The **Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)** is responsible for conserving and protecting aquatic habitat, working to collaboratively manage commercial, recreational and Indigenous fisheries, and creating conditions to support sustainable aquaculture. **Health Canada** regulates consumer products, delivering environmental health and protection programs, tracking diseases, and overseeing workplace health. The **Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)** promotes good health, preventing chronic diseases and injury, and protecting against infectious diseases and other health threats.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

The BC Provincial Government shares a similar mandate for agriculture and health with the Federal Government but has primary authority for economic growth, job creation, social welfare, transportation systems, and the environment. The **Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF)** is the most closely aligned with agriculture and food production in the province and also monitors and manages the risk of diseases that affect farming, working to balance urban / agricultural interests while also delivering farm income stabilization and extension services programs. MAF also funds the **Agricultural Land Commission (ALC)** and the **BC Farm Industry Review Board (FIRB)**, the latter of which adjudicates on 'normal farm practices'.

The **Ministry of Health Services** ensures access to quality, appropriate and timely health services and sets province-wide goals, standards and performance agreements for health authorities. The **BC Centre for Disease Control (CDIC)** manages a range of provincial programs and clinics that contribute to public health, including a focus on improving food security.

Ministry of Environment's engages in sustainable environmental management and works on strategies to manage waste, recover resources, reduce toxins and emissions, and conserve wildlife and marine species and habitats. Additionally, the **Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship's** role relates to water

governance, agricultural water infrastructure programs, watershed and salmon restoration and drought management specific to BC.

The **Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport** is responsible for supporting vibrant, thriving communities with diverse tourism, arts, culture, sport, and heritage opportunities to contribute to the overall well-being and resilience of BC residents. The well-being of residents is also supported through the **Ministry of Education and Childcare** which is actively involved in enhancing school food programs through a Feeding Futures program, which works to ensure children have access to healthy meals and snacks at school. The Ministry is also working with the Federal Government to implement a *National School Food Program in BC* which will provide additional funding to districts and schools to expand their food programs



The BC Provincial Government also supports food systems, in collaboration with the Federal Government and non-profit organizations, through innovation and technology programs to assist overcoming obstacles or barriers to the growth and success of agriculture and food businesses. Examples of some of these programs include:

- * Agri-Innovate Program
- * Agritech concierge
- * BC Centre for Agritech Innovation (BCCAI)
- * BC Food Hub Network
- * Canadian Agri-food Automation and Intelligence Network (CAAIN)
- * Canadian Food Innovation Network (CFIN)

The BC Provincial Government also takes targeted action to assist the provincial food system when faced with the impacts of geopolitical decisions. For example, in response to the tariffs imposed on Canadian imports to the United States, the **Premier's Task Force on Agriculture and Food Economy** was formed in February 2025 with 16 members representing the entire food industry intending to work with the Province to strengthen BC's agriculture and food economy.



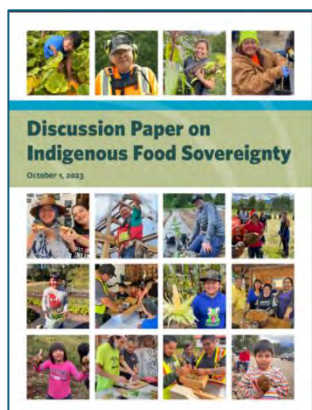
LOCAL FIRST NATIONS

There are ten local First Nations located in the Metro Vancouver region: qíćáý (Katzie), q̓ʷa:ńłəń (Kwantlen), k̓wíkʷəłəm (Kwikwetlem), máthxwi (Matsqui), x̓ʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), qíqéyt (Qayqayt), Semihamoo, S̓k̓w̓xwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), scə́waθən məsteyəx̓ʷ (Tsawwassen), and sə́lilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh).



Many Indigenous Peoples throughout the region are involved in economic development and food security planning for their communities and people. This may involve fisheries, harvesting of plants, berries and other traditional resources, and participating in agriculture. Some Indigenous communities receive support from organizations working to increase the capacity of Indigenous communities and provide specific tools and programs designed to advance food security and food sovereignty in support of traditional food collection, harvesting and growing methods.

Organizations like **New Relationship Trust** and **Investment Agriculture Foundation** provide funding opportunities to support several focus areas including Indigenous food security and **First Nations Health Authority**, the first and only provincial First Nations health authority in Canada, also supports food system programs that support Indigenous food-related activities including community harvesting events, food preparation, and medicinal gardens (e.g., First Nations Traditional Food Fact Sheets).



The BC Provincial Government has also taken steps to increase its support to build capacity for Indigenous Peoples in the production of food for their communities through the **BC Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food**. The Council was created to establish a mechanism by which members and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food could work together to support the realization of Indigenous People's food systems and agriculture-related priorities.

MEMBER JURISDICTIONS

The extent of the member jurisdiction role in the existing regional food system is determined by the type of lands within their jurisdiction. For communities with large tracts of farmland, agriculture is an important element of their economy and community fabric requiring specific plans and services, or bylaws to support farming while maintaining the character of rural areas. Those member jurisdictions that don't have significant areas of farmland tend to put more emphasis on community services, urban agriculture, farmers' markets and other methods for residents to access fresh, locally grown food. A local government's role in a food system is also closely tied to its jurisdictional responsibilities, including:

- * governing land uses through an Official Community Plan and other land use planning documents
- * governing zoning bylaws to specify how food producers, food industry businesses, and homeowners can use their property
- * deciding how to use jurisdiction-owned lands
- * establishing taxation levels for farmland and other property assessment categories
- * developing plans for local infrastructure, buildings and properties (e.g., composting facilities, community centres, and parks) that can be used to support community food security

- * supplying drinking water, solid waste collection, stormwater management, drainage, diking systems, and enforcing riparian regulations
- * developing community economic development plans to increase agriculture or other food sector businesses
- * using public education as a means to address a range of health and social problems that confront their residents promoting community engagement to involve citizens in developing food policies and initiatives.

Member jurisdictions in the Metro Vancouver region have been influential in supporting the advancement of a sustainable, resilient and robust food system through their individual plans, strategies, policies and projects. This work is further highlighted in Appendix C.

HEALTH AUTHORITIES

The **Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)** and regional health authorities provide a range of services from hospital care to community-based residential, home health, mental health, and public health services. Through the **Community Food Action Initiative** and the **Food Skills for Families** program, these health authorities link health with food objectives. In Metro Vancouver, **Vancouver Coastal Health** delivers services to Vancouver, Richmond and the North Shore member jurisdictions, while **Fraser Health** provides services to member jurisdictions north and south of the Fraser River from Burnaby, Maple Ridge and the Township of Langley.



FOOD SECTOR

The food sector includes a wide range of businesses that move fresh farm and seafood products from the farm or dock to food processors and packagers, wholesalers and food service distributors. From there food is purchased by grocery stores, food markets, and food specialty stores where it is sold, largely unprepared, in a retail setting to consumers or is purchased by restaurants, hotels, hospitals, and cafeterias where it is largely provided to consumers or patrons in a prepared format.

A large majority of the farm fresh food grown or raised in Metro Vancouver is sold directly to wholesalers for grading or packaging before being distributed to local food retailers or shipped externally to national and international markets. Food processing in this region is largely comprised of medium-to-small-scale businesses while wholesale distribution centres are comprised of larger retail chains or private companies with national and international reach.

While food production is often viewed as a public service, in reality, the food sector is comprised of private businesses operating with the need to be financially viable in the face of changes to market demand, production costs, competition, regulation, industry structure, national and international trade agreements and decisions, international conflict and access to inputs, and the unpredictable impacts of climate change.

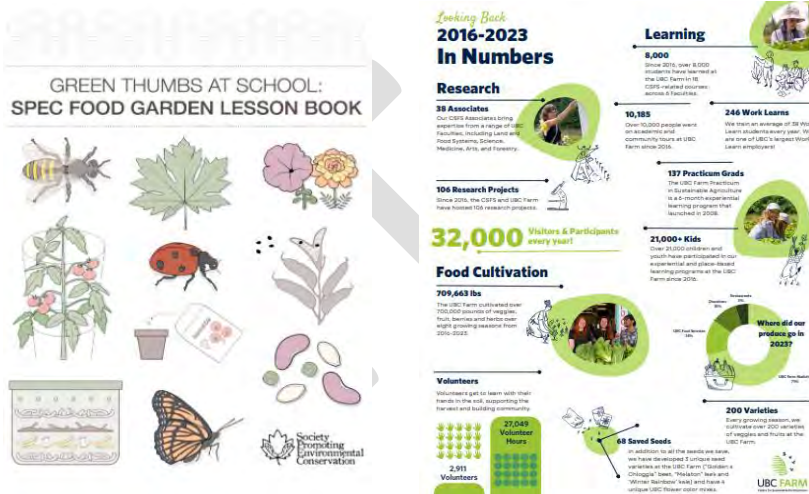
NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

Non-government organizations (NGOs) and community groups fill a critical role in influencing and supporting many components of a regional food system. Given the food security challenges this region faces, whether from significant health, climate or geopolitical events, there is an ever-growing interest in understanding the social and environmental implications of the overall food system, and how that affects residents and

businesses. While government-based programs and supports are extensive, there is on-going community demand for non-government organizations to incorporate agriculture, fisheries, public health and environmental considerations into their agendas. This is very challenging as the food system work conducted by these organizations is not only increasingly filling critical community needs, but is also highly reliant on volunteer work, and largely supported financially through donations or grants.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Schools, universities and colleges are sites for important research as well as creative teaching initiatives that influence and support changes in the regional food system. As centres for learning and research, scientists and other experts at universities can make important contributions in developing and analyzing practices, policies and technologies that will lead to innovations in the food system. In addition to contributions to science and research, educational institutions are important sites for initiating change in the food system. Educational institutions also provide key platforms and programs to connect younger generations to the process of growing food, for example, planting gardens at elementary schools or advanced university learning opportunities in agricultural practices.



CONSUMERS AND THE PUBLIC

Consumer demand is a powerful force in the food system. While not a new movement, due to significant pressures on food systems from recent challenging geopolitical decisions made by Canadian trading partners, consumer demand has significantly increased for information about where food is produced and what it means to be consuming local or Canadian-made products. Consumers are also consistently interested in information about:

- * pesticide use
- * food production technologies and practices
- * working conditions for farm workers and fishermen
- * wasted food reduction
- * food packaging waste
- * climate change impacts on food production
- * food safety





PART THREE: LOOKING FOOD FORWARD

A Strategic Approach for a Resilient Regional Food System

Priorities and Strategic Actions

- Elevate Local Agricultural Production

- Support a Regional Circular Food System

- Manage Food System Disruptions

- Reduce Food Insecurity

- Support Indigenous Food Systems

- Address Government, Data and Education Gaps

PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

A robust food system that meets the needs of the region is one that supports ongoing profitability in the food sector, addresses inequities in food access, and is resilient and capable of recovering from unforeseen setbacks and short-term crises. Food systems are complex and dynamic and represent an inter-dependent range of industries that regularly evolve in the face of changing economic forces, environmental constraints, and community priorities. Metro Vancouver's first *Regional Food System Strategy* and *Regional Food System Action Plan* contained a comprehensive list of over 160 actions intended to support the vision of a sustainable, resilient and healthy food system.

An audit of the RFSS (see Appendix D), as well as input received during the engagement phase of the update to the RFSS, highlighted food system issues that require new and on-going consideration as part of this update process. Broadly categorized, these issues include:

- * Loss of agricultural and food infrastructure (ALR, land use, land costs, processing)
- * Market forces and economic disruptions (geopolitical, supply chains, tariffs, international domestic policy)
- * Climate change and environmental impacts (droughts, heat, flooding, resilience, GHG emissions)
- * Indigenous considerations (security and sovereignty)
- * Food insecurity stresses (labour and housing shortages, COVID 19, food distribution, poverty, income disparity, cultural and demographic changes, education and consumer awareness)
- * Wasted food and circular food systems (zero waste, regenerative agriculture, culture shift)
- * Policy, governance and education gaps (leadership, data)

To address these issues, six priorities have been identified in *Food Forward* to guide decision making and resource allocation:

- | | |
|---|---|
| – Elevate Local Agricultural Production | – Reduce Food Insecurity |
| – Support a Regional Circular Food System | – Support Indigenous Food Systems |
| – Manage Food System Disruptions | – Address Government, Data and Education Gaps |

These priorities are not presented in order of importance. All priorities require equal consideration.



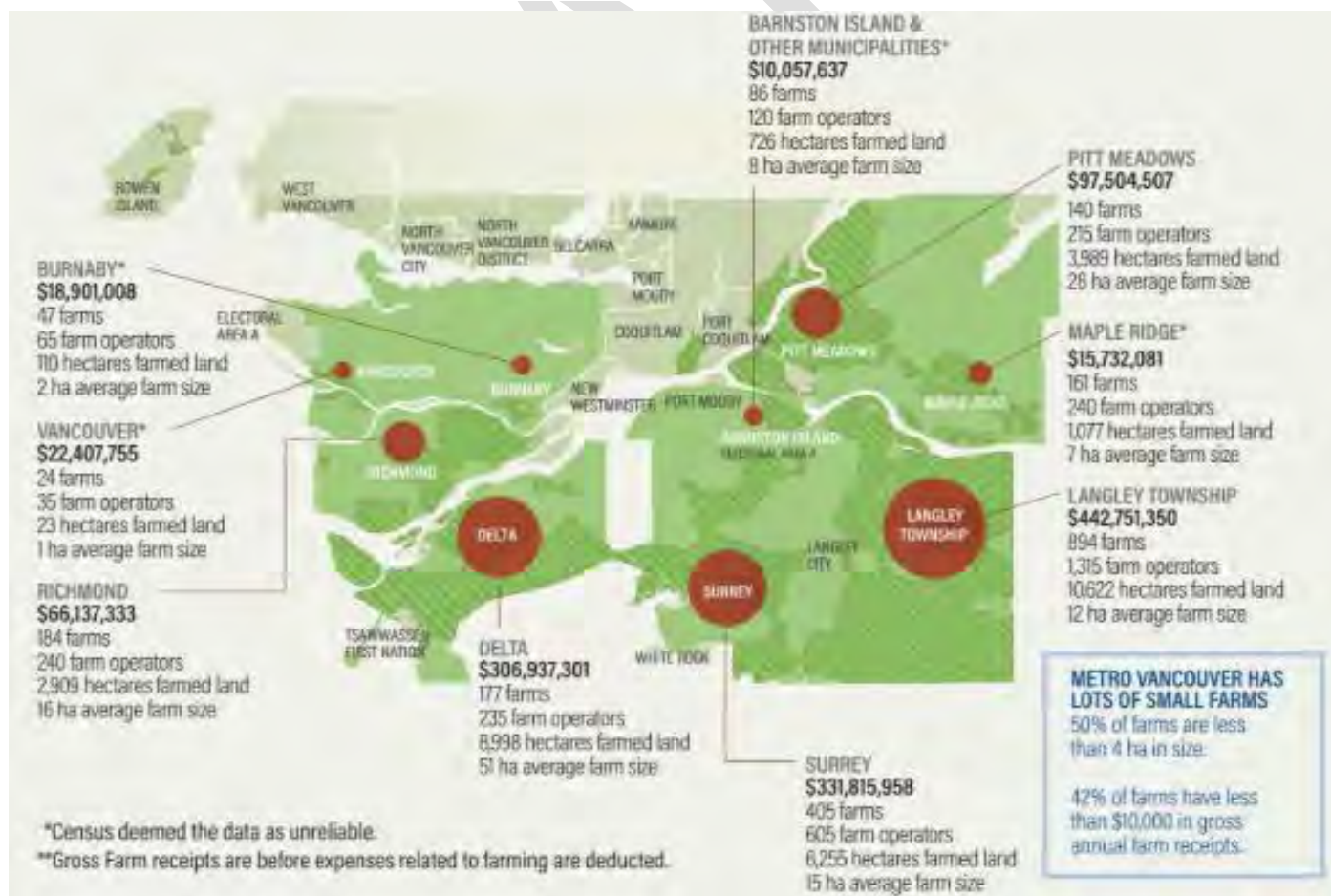
ELEVATE LOCAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

The Metro Vancouver region has productive agricultural lands, a biologically rich coastline and freshwater resources from which to produce food. Comprising approximately 20% of the land base in the region (Figure 2, Agriculture in the Metro Vancouver region), the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is the backbone to the Metro Vancouver regional food system. Direct farm jobs employ over 12,000 people (2020, Census Canada) and annual operating revenues exceed \$1.3 billion (2020, Census

Canada). While under considerable and on-going pressure to accommodate all forms of urban uses, including residential, commercial, industrial and recreational, agricultural lands in the region are highly productive and continue to support the growing Metro Vancouver population as well as serve external markets throughout British Columbia, Canada and beyond.

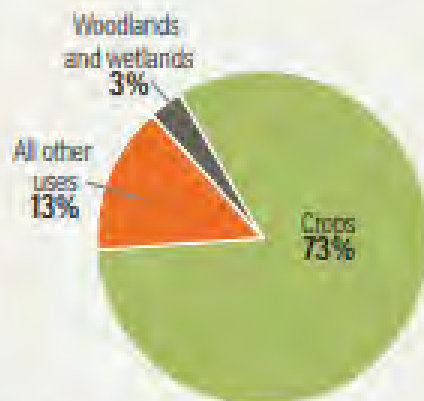
Comprising approximately 1.5% of the total agricultural land in British Columbia but generating a substantial amount of the province's gross farm income, agricultural lands in Metro Vancouver provide a wide diversity of products, largely from small family-owned operations. While these small farms encourage diversification, they are also highly susceptible to speculation or ALR exclusions for other urban uses looking for cheaper land than what is available within the greater urban core.

Figure 2: Agriculture in the Metro Vancouver region



FARM MANAGEMENT

LAND USE ON FARMS IN 2021



Other uses on farms includes buildings and greenhouses.

75%

of the total farm area is owned by farmers

25%

of the total farm area is leased or rented from others

The number of farms using beneficial land management practices has decreased over the last 5 years.

23%

percent of farms practice rotational grazing

35%

percent of farms use windbreaks or shelterbelts

12%

percent of farms are plowing down green manure

11%

percent of farms use winter cover crops

761

farms are irrigating **10,811 ha** of land

643

farms are using **manure** a 12% decrease from 2017

106

farms are growing **organic** products for sale

NUMBER OF LIVESTOCK AND CROP FARMS

FARMS IN METRO VANCOUVER PRODUCE A WIDE VARIETY OF CROPS AND LIVESTOCK

332

EGG PRODUCTION

422

CHICKEN + HEN

106

TURKEY + OTHER POULTRY

251

HORSE + PONY

293

CATTLE (BEEF + DAIRY)

120

BEE COLONIES

153

SHEEP + LAMB



742

FRUIT, NUT AND BERRY



618

HAY AND FIELD CROPS



353

VEGETABLE



141

NURSERY AND SOD



215

GREENHOUSE PRODUCTS



22

POTATO



13

MUSHROOM

Blueberries are the most widely planted crop in Metro Vancouver.

For further information see the 2021 Census of Agriculture bulletin on the Metro Vancouver website.

Speculation and the proliferation of permitted non-farm uses within the ALR boundary are increasingly becoming more of a concern. Additionally, there are a myriad of other factors that place significant barriers to turning agricultural land perfectly suited for food production into functioning, viable farming operations, including:

- * Absentee landowners holding agricultural land for urban development opportunities
- * Large residential estate owners uninterested in farming their agricultural land
- * Non-farm landowners uninterested in leasing land to producers who want to farm

- * Non-farm landowners avoiding long term (e.g., > 2 years) leases limiting ability for agricultural investment
- * Limited local channels for food preparation, processing and storage and for direct sales to consumers
- * Exclusion of agriculture from economic development strategies
- * Small farms unable to directly compete with large multinational food organizations
- * Dwindling water sources needed food production
- * Changes in soil quality and hydrology due to adjacent urban development and climate change impacts (e.g., increased flooding and increased saltwater inundation)

An additional barrier to retaining agricultural land for agricultural purposes is that the value lens that is often used to describe agricultural land is from the perspective of urban development. Descriptions such as “vacant”, “un-used” or “under productive” are value statements directly proportional to how the land can be developed rather than it being retained for agricultural purposes. Additionally, investment required to turn bare land into agricultural production is often identified as a limitation to support farming



while investment required to develop vacant land for urban development is seen as a necessity. While these viewpoints are related to the differences in value placed on urban land versus agricultural land, they also reflect the differences in return on investment between agricultural production and urban development highlighting the need to continue to support agriculture in the region, and particularly to protect the land for its intended purpose of supporting agriculture.

From a food system perspective, the challenges and pressures on agricultural land and the future of farming in this region are significant and will require a concerted, coordinated effort from all sectors, levels of government and society as a whole to ensure local food production remains viable and attractive enough to support a new generation of farmers. Despite the extensive challenges facing the agricultural sector in this region, prioritizing and elevating the ability for this region to efficiently and regeneratively produce local food is vital to ensure all Metro Vancouver residents are food secure, particularly in the face of uncertainties in the global food system, whether from climate change impacts or geopolitical decisions.

To elevate the ability for this region to increase local food production, *Food Forward* highlights areas where strategic efforts can be focused to make a collaborative and concerted effort to protect agricultural land within the region.



WHAT METRO VANCOUVER CAN DO...

Metro Vancouver intersects with *Priority: Elevate Local Agricultural Production* across all departments but more specifically Regional Planning, Solid Waste, Water Services, Invest Vancouver, Regional Parks and school and youth programs.



Regional Planning



Invest Vancouver



Regional Parks



Water




Solid Waste

Youth4Action
LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS
K-12 SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Actions best suited for Metro Vancouver include:

1. **Agricultural Land Production Guide** – Working with member jurisdictions and the BC Government, develop a Bring Agricultural Land into Production Guide to support long-term use and viability of the remaining supply of agriculture land in the region.
2. **Regional Land Use Designations** – review policies in *Metro 2050* to reduce competition between industrial and agricultural regional land use designations.
3. **Industrial Lands** – update Section 2.2 of *Metro 2050* to reinforce that solutions to the shortage of industrial lands must not include encroachment onto agricultural lands, ensuring consistency with the *Regional Industrial Land Strategy*. 
4. **Agricultural Impact Assessment** – Working with member jurisdictions and the BC Government, develop an agriculture impact assessment decision-making tool for development adjacent to land within the Agricultural Land Reserve.
5. **Land Analysis** – Working with member jurisdictions and the BC Government, conduct an in-depth review of agricultural land across the region to determine which non-farmed areas are best suited to support ecosystem services or non-soil-based agriculture. 

6. **Soil Management** – Advocate to the BC Government to update the *Soil Management Handbook for the Lower Fraser Valley* with a focus on ALR land downstream from, below and adjacent to new or expanded infrastructure and urban development. [REF QQ](#)
7. **Soil Tracking:** Work with member jurisdictions and the BC Government to develop a pilot soil tracking program for agricultural lands across the region. 

WHAT OTHERS CAN DO...

Other jurisdictions that intersect with *Priority: Elevate Local Agricultural Production* include provincial and local governments. Actions best suited for other jurisdictions include:

- * **Food Policy** – local governments can directly include food security policies in their Official Community Plans and land use and economic development strategies, for example:
 - prioritize and protect agricultural land for agricultural purposes through decision-making
 - tightly regulate, and where permitted under the *Agricultural Land Conservation Act*, significantly restrict non-farm uses within the Agricultural Land Reserve
 - adjust land use policies and zoning regulations to increase processing and cold storage options, aggregation and distribution outside of the ALR
 - identify agricultural land protection and food system security as top priorities in corporate strategic plans and departmental work plans
 - expand access to public land for local food production
- * **Value Capture** – local governments can reduce agricultural land speculation by applying value capture mechanisms for the benefit and compensation of agriculture when ALR land is excluded or converted to non-farm use.

SUPPORT A REGIONAL CIRCULAR FOOD SYSTEM

Metro Vancouver's food system is made up of a complex network of interconnected processes and participants all working to ensure food is grown, processed, distributed and made available for consumption. As with most food systems across Canada, Metro Vancouver's food system largely operates along a linear structure with a one-way flow from production to consumption which is vulnerable to labour disruptions, extreme climate events, geo-political disputes, long-distance supply chains, external food production and imports, and food safety and public health emergencies, and that treats waste products as disposable burdens rather than valuable opportunities. [REF](#)

Across Canada, individual businesses, communities, and regional municipal districts are increasingly embracing a circular food systems mindset recognizing there are a wide range of benefits in doing so.

Examples of some benefits include:

- * Reducing food insecurity by expanding opportunities for direct access to local food (e.g., farmer's markets)

- * Strengthening relationships with local First Nations communities through supporting Indigenous food production techniques
- * Increasing efficiency of food distribution for human consumption (e.g., food hubs, shorter supply chains)
- * Increasing resilience of local production through regenerative farm practices (e.g., cover cropping) which create more resilient growing conditions (e.g., improved soil moisture) that then create the ability for farms to better withstand the impacts of climate change (e.g., drought)
- * Recycling and recovering valuable materials and nutrients to keep them in use longer (e.g., coordinating food recovery programs)
- * Increasing efficient use of limited land base (e.g., reduce agricultural-industrial conflicts)
- * Increasing innovation, economic output and employment.

While there have been shifts amongst businesses throughout Metro Vancouver toward embracing circular food system activities, there are still significant challenges impeding the overall 'system change' required for a regional food system to truly function in a circular capacity.



Facilitating a shift toward creating a regional circular food system requires adjusting existing priorities, connections, value chains, decision-making structures, and markets. Local and regional governments can play a

the City of Guelph and Wellington County in Ontario and by the Circular Innovation Launchpad (COIL), Halifax Regional Municipality, and Halifax Food Policy Alliance in Nova Scotia. That work can be used to inform how Metro Vancouver focuses its policies and resources on achieving a circular food system reflective of the challenges and opportunities represented within this region.



central role in supporting these shifts through policy and regulatory adjustments, coordinated decision making, consistent, on-going action, establishing clear direction, and supporting data, programming and economic development research and support. Metro Vancouver has already begun investing in this transition through the Food Mesh initiative, solid waste food recovery efforts, and through the work done by the National Zero Waste Council (NZWC).

The NZWC is leading Canada's transition to a circular economy by bringing government, business and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) together to advance a waste prevention agenda that maximizes economic opportunity for everyone's benefit. The Council has been at the forefront of key circular food system initiatives such as the work done by

The Circular Economy Action Plan for Canada (2023) [REF](#), co-developed by Circular Economy Leadership Canada (CELC) and the Circular Innovation Council (CIC), is an open-source guide that can also be used as a template to focus resources and decision making toward a functioning circular economy. The Action Plan is divided into five 'enablers' or primary drivers of a circular economy including:

1. **Information** – leveraging data, information, education and training as a foundation for success
2. **Collaboration** – establishing new partnerships and cultural connections to accelerate change
3. **Innovation** – stimulating circular innovation across industries, sectors and supply chains
4. **Policy** – aligning policy, procurement, and standards to drive accelerated circular economy action and investments
5. **Investment** – directing capital and financing to support circularity and address infrastructure gaps.



This Action Plan was a useful guide to prioritize actions in *Food Forward* that will enable Metro Vancouver's food system to begin a journey toward circularity.

WHAT METRO VANCOUVER CAN DO...

Metro Vancouver intersects with *Priority: Create a Regional Circular Food System Economy* through Solid Waste, Invest Vancouver, Regional Planning, Liquid Waste, and school and youth programs.



Solid Waste



Invest Vancouver



Regional Planning



Liquid Waste



Actions best suited for Metro Vancouver include:

1. **Policy Resources Toolkit** – identify how member jurisdictions can integrate food system circularity into relevant policies and regulations (e.g., adjusting zoning bylaws to permit co-location of circular food system businesses).
2. **Food Alliance** – convene a regional Food Alliance comprised of food sector representatives (e.g., farmers, processors, food rescuers, hospitality, grocers, haulers, etc.) to develop sector-led actions and reporting mechanisms to support transitioning to a regional circular food system.
3. **Recoverable Food** – conduct regional-level analysis on the return on investment, production costs and logistical and administrative requirements that would support a private or non-profit run region-serving recovered food and imperfect food market.
4. **Education and Awareness** – explore new opportunities and utilize relationship building activities to raise awareness about circular food systems (e.g., through youth programs, corporate events, media releases)
5. **Circular Water Economy** – prepare a food system circular water economy strategy that examines the use of all potential water sources including wastewater, brackish and sea water, meat and dairy wastewater, and agricultural drainage, accounting for return on investment, infrastructure upgrades, and ISO



standards (e.g., ISO/TC 202/SCI; ISO 16075 series).

6. **Waste Separation** – review existing regional-level mandatory waste source separation programs (e.g., Regional District of Nanaimo) to determine applicability and implementation specifications for Metro Vancouver.

7. **Data Collection** – sign Memorandum of Understanding with large grocery stores to collect waste data to better align with existing food recovery and recycling efforts across the region.



WHAT OTHERS CAN DO...

Other jurisdictions that intersect with *Priority: Support a Regional Circular Food System Economy* include provincial and local governments, First Nations, health authorities, and school districts. Actions best suited for other jurisdictions include:

- * **Food Policy:** All jurisdictions can develop support a regional circular food system by developing local-level circular food policies and by supporting educational and awareness campaigns and programs that target:
 - food waste and the waste cycle overall
 - growing food in urban public areas
 - nutritional value of 'imperfect' food
 - economic benefits of circularity

MANAGE FOOD SYSTEM DISRUPTIONS

Metro Vancouver's food system is nested within larger national and international systems, each with their own strengths, weaknesses and sources of disruption that greatly impact both short and long-term functionality. These sources of disruption include loss of food system infrastructure, climate related events, shifts toward large corporation dominance, global health emergencies, multi-national trade agreements, spread of urban development, introduction of new technology and AI systems, and political unrest. While all these issues affect Metro Vancouver's regional food system, *Food Forward* focuses on two disruptions that can be addressed more directly through local and regional efforts: food system supportive infrastructure and climate adaptation challenges.

FOOD SYSTEM SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Food system supportive infrastructure comprises a wide range of businesses and government programs that enable the ability for food to transition from production to consumption (e.g., processing plants, flash freezers, cold storage, abattoirs, input suppliers, machinery dealerships, and government research facilities and extension services such as access to agrologists, grant funding and on-field workshops).

Over the past several decades, changes to Canada's production and

processing sectors have been noticeable and significant, including:

- * free trade deregulation accelerated production consolidation and transnational ownership of handling and processing facilities
- * Canadian transportation cost increases creating significant disadvantages for agricultural exports
- * steady decline in storage elevators, rail service, machinery dealerships, manufacturing, processing, input suppliers, essential community services and retail outlets
- * federal and provincial cutbacks on agricultural research facilities and government extension services
- * growing dependence on food imports and loss of export markets.

Additionally, extreme weather, COVID-19, inflation, and geo-political shifts have disrupted food supply chains and contributed to food price inflation. This shift, in conjunction with the challenges to sustain production and processing, has created an imbalance in the Metro Vancouver food system that needs a strategic plan of investment and action to ensure food security is maintained for the long-term.

Gaps highlighted in the infrastructure supporting Metro Vancouver's regional food system often focuses on processing alone as a major impediment in restricting growth in the food economy. While the challenges with providing processing options are real, there are many other issues that also hinder the expansion of the region's food system, including access to:

- * affordable land for farming
- * skilled labour, including engineers and computer science technicians
- * agri-tech and innovation and
- * the high capital and output costs required to beta test then fully integrate new technology and operating systems into an agricultural operation.

Additionally, new trade tensions with the United States have highlighted the degree to which Canada's economy, including Canada's food processing sector, is highly integrated and reliant upon the US. This dependence in turn contributes to local food insecurity and overall reduces the region's ability to buffer industry losses against geo-political disruptions **add RSC Notation** Supporting a truly local food economy relies on a robust network of local producers, particularly small-medium scale farmers and fishermen that largely focus on fulfilling the needs of local populations rather

than supporting export markets. As with any business, these producers rely on financial viability to keep operating, which is significantly challenging in the Metro Vancouver region where all costs to operate are considerable and prohibitive.

Local governments can have significant positive impacts on supporting local farmers and fishermen by ensuring land use policies and bylaws are not prohibitive, by ensuring adequate infrastructure and services are in place to accommodate the specific needs of agricultural production, and by cultivating direct relationships with the farming and fishing communities to increase the understanding of the specific barriers each faces in bringing their products to local consumers.

CLIMATE ADAPTATION CHALLENGES

From a food supply chain perspective, resilience can also be supported by specifically planning for emergencies, particularly from natural disasters or climate-related disruptions, as well as enhancing the region's food recovery network, supporting food access planning, and preparing for food system disruptions during crises. Metro Vancouver could have a role in planning for food system resilience during emergencies by working with other levels of government and non-profit agencies to enhance the region's food recovery network, support emergency food access planning, and prepare for food system disruptions.

Productive farmland and fisheries depend on healthy natural systems that, among other things, pollinate crops, regenerate soils, and cycle nutrients. While these systems are affected by a host of human activities, changes in the practices and behaviours of everyone involved in the regional food system is necessary to conserve, restore and protect the natural legacy of Metro Vancouver. This will involve changes in farming and fishing practices as well as changes in the purchase and disposal of food. At the same time, a commitment to sustainability requires being proactive in evaluating how best to adapt food production in the region to the effects of climate change.

Farmers and fishermen rely on healthy functioning ecosystems for their livelihood. In the case of farmers their lands also contribute to the ecological health of the region by providing drainage, habitat and carbon sequestration. The farmers of the region tend to be good stewards of their lands but the financial realities of farming means that programs that encourage the owners of agricultural lands to conserve and enhance the ecological services are also necessary to ensure the Regional Food System Strategy long-term sustainability of the region.

Despite the importance of maintaining a viable agriculture sector, to date the issue of agricultural adaptation to climate change has received little attention in BC. There is a critical need to determine how best to support the industry with climate change adaptation and how to increase food security in the face of a changing climate.

Healthy, functioning ecosystems are essential for the on-going provision of food as well as other vital ecosystem services such as clean air and clean water, which all residents of this region depend on. By purchasing fresh, local food, residents, businesses, and public sector institutions contribute to and create a strong, vital food sector that then stimulates new investment, jobs and economic growth. Additionally, policies that increase public awareness about making sustainable, local food choices, combined with programs that improve food access for all, contribute to a healthier region at both an individual and community level.

To move the dial on better managing the food system disruptions that are reducing food insecurity in the region, *Food Forward* highlights areas where Metro Vancouver and other jurisdictions can strategically and collectively focus efforts to addressing the gaps and challenges that affect local farms and fisheries from remaining viable, long-term food sector businesses.

WHAT METRO VANCOUVER CAN DO...

Metro Vancouver intersects with *Priority: Manage Food System Disruptions* across all departments but more specifically Regional Planning, Solid Waste, Water Services, Invest Vancouver and Regional Parks.



Actions best suited for Metro Vancouver include:

1. **Innovation Initiatives** – work with private industry to develop a food system cross-sector “innovation contest” intended to tackle the challenges of and elevate the food system issues across agriculture, food processing, food access, wasted food and cross-jurisdictional collaboration.
2. **Food System Clusters** – work with local and Provincial governments and the private sector, deep dive into how the Metro Vancouver region can position itself as a super cluster of mutually-supportive food businesses to support a circular food system and reduce food system disruptions.
3. **Ecosystem Services** – work with the BC Government, local governments, non-profit organizations and the private sector to determine how a long-term payment for ecosystem services program could be established to compensate farmers for the ecological goods and services that agricultural land provides.
4. **Asset Map** – work with member jurisdictions to conduct an inventory of individual community food system assets to identify the appropriate strategies for food system-related economic development across the region.
5. **Emergency Planning**- develop an emergency food security planning toolkit to assist member jurisdictions to incorporate emergency food security policies and actions into local operations and decision-making.



WHAT OTHERS CAN DO:

Other jurisdictions that intersect with *Priority: Manage Food System Disruptions* include provincial and local governments, First Nations, health authorities, and school districts. Actions best suited for other jurisdictions include:

- * **Understanding and Support** – local governments can directly address food system disruptions by:
 - reviewing local level land use plans through a food lens – specifically supporting cold storage, commercial and community kitchens, food testing labs, food warehousing, food hubs, and distribution centres
 - investing in and expanding infrastructure support for small-scale producers and processors
 - developing cross-jurisdictional agreements with clear actions to address specific challenges
 - developing a better understanding of food production and the supply chain to better inform solutions to challenges (e.g. distribute data, connect other systems planning such as transportation to help solve supply chain problems, assess underutilized resources such as commercial, industrial, public lands)

REDUCE FOOD INSECURITY

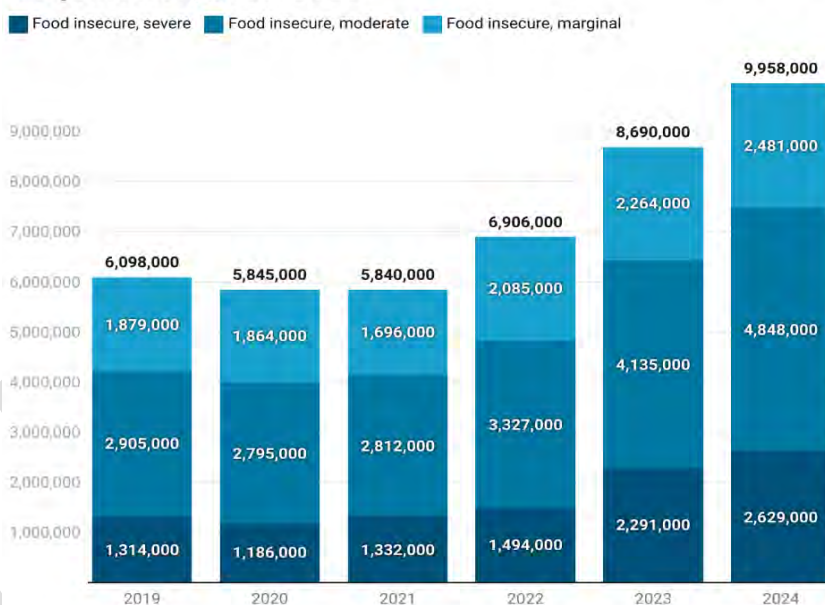
Metro Vancouver is one of the most expensive regions to live in Canada. Whether it be from the cost of housing, transportation, or food, the economic pressures placed on residents in this region have also created a growing prevalence of food insecurity. An issue that was once largely experienced by low-income households or specific segments of the population such as single mothers, immigrants, Indigenous Peoples, seniors and children, is increasingly also affecting a broader segment of society with an ever-increasing number of people living in Metro Vancouver not having access to the food they need and want. [REF S](#); [REF N](#)

While food insecurity is first and foremost an issue that affects people's health and well-being, it is a growing challenge (see Figure 3: Number of people living in food-insecure households in the ten provinces, 2019-2024) that also negatively contributes to reduced regional economic performance reflected in factors such as: reduced workforce productivity, increased health care costs, poor educational outcomes, and greater demands on social services. Lost economic potential is also reflected in increases in the erosion of employment opportunities in agriculture and food production, a lack of a living wage in food-related retail and service sectors, and an over-reliance on non-profit and faith-based organizations to distribute food, provide meal programs, offer community kitchen access, and

actively rescue and redistribute wasted food originally intended for human consumption.

Figure 3:

Number of people living in food-insecure households in the ten provinces, 2019-2024



Canadian Income Survey (CIS) 2018-2023. Data on food insecurity for CIS are collected in the year following the survey reference year. We've chosen to label the data using the year of data collection to better reflect the timing of experiences captured.

Statistics Canada publishes territorial statistics from CIS separately from provincial statistics. Some territorial statistics have been published in articles in Statistics Canada's The Daily, but the public data tables used for this graph currently does not include the territories.

Chart: PROOF • Source: Statistics Canada Table 13-10-0834-01 • Created with Datawrapper

From a food system perspective, food insecurity issues in Metro Vancouver became especially evident during two specific significant events: 1) the COVID-19 pandemic, and 2) the November 2021 atmospheric river that caused flooding that destroyed significant trade routes to and from the Metro Vancouver region. Both of these events exposed significant weaknesses in food distribution mechanisms and communication channels, and for COVID especially, exposed the over-reliance on a network of volunteers operating as the backbone to the provision and distribution of food to vulnerable populations. These weaknesses also highlighted the lack of a cohesive understanding of what constitutes Metro Vancouver's food system, where resources are located, and the chronic gaps and challenges, identified during the *Food Forward* engagement, that need to be addressed. [REF E](#)



Reducing food insecurity in Metro Vancouver will require a coordinated effort across all levels of government and between government and non-governmental organizations. Metro Vancouver's current role centres around supporting member jurisdictions in their decision-making by providing housing, development, employment and population data and projections, convening region-wide working committees, advocacy to

higher levels of government, researching and suggesting best practices, and implementing policies and practices identified in *Metro 2050*, the regional growth strategy. To move the dial on reducing food insecurity in the region, *Food Forward* highlights areas where Metro Vancouver can strategically focus its efforts, with a specific emphasis on providing higher-level analysis of regional issues across the entire food system spectrum and on convening divergent sectors of the food system to collectively solve problems based on self-identified values and goals. *Food Forward* also highlights actions that other jurisdictions can undertake to address food insecurity within their individual realms of influence.

WHAT METRO VANCOUVER CAN DO...

Metro Vancouver intersects with *Priority: Reduce Food Insecurity* through Regional Planning, Housing, Solid Waste, Invest Vancouver and school and youth programs.



Regional Planning



Housing



Solid Waste



Invest Vancouver



Actions best suited for Metro Vancouver include:

1. **Local Food Charters** – work with member jurisdictions to prepare local Food Charters to encourage communication, collaboration, action and innovation across all food-related sectors within their communities and with other member jurisdictions across the region.
2. **Food Alliance** – convene a regional Food Alliance comprised of non-profit food recovery and food assistance providers to identify specific challenges requiring region-wide cross-sector collaboration. Develop reporting mechanisms to gauge achievement.
3. **Community Partnerships** – leverage food focused Metro Vancouver programs (e.g., Agricultural Awareness Grants, School and Youth Leadership Programs, Food Skills for Families) in partnership with member jurisdictions, First Nations, school districts and health authorities to improve outreach and education about food security.
3. **Data Collection** – utilize existing data, collect new data, and/or collaborate with other data providers through data sharing agreements to align food security trends and challenges with regional food system functions and land use decisions. Develop reporting mechanisms to gauge achievement.
4. **Emergency Preparedness** – host a regional Emergency Food Preparedness forum between Metro Vancouver, the BC Government, and member jurisdictions to strategize on incorporating emergency food system planning directly into emergency preparedness plans.

5. **Food Security Toolkit**: develop a food security toolkit to assist member jurisdictions to incorporate food security policies and actions into local operations and decision-making. Ref

WHAT OTHERS CAN DO...

Other jurisdictions that intersect with *Priority: Reduce Food Insecurity* include provincial and local governments, First Nations, health authorities, and school districts. Actions best suited for other jurisdictions include:

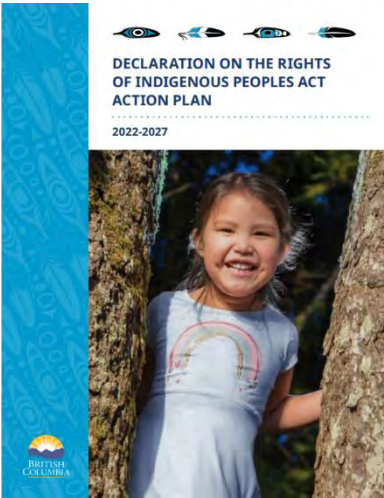
- * **Food Polic** – local governments can directly include food security policies in their Official Community Plans and land use strategies, for example:
 - recognizing food as a human right
 - recognizing the unique food needs of Indigenous Peoples in their communities
 - embedding food system policies within climate policies.
- * **Community Partnerships** – utilizing existing research and programs (e.g., Eater's Toolkit), local governments can co-develop food security strategies and local food charters, facilitate knowledge-sharing, support capacity-building recreation programs and support local food procurement standards. REF HH
- * **Food System Assets** – local jurisdictions can invest in and support food system infrastructure such as urban farms, community kitchens, community gardens and food hubs to increase the resilience of residents and food businesses in their communities.

SUPPORT INDIGENOUS FOOD SYSTEMS

Metro Vancouver is committed to fostering respect, reconciliation and meaningful dialogue and outcomes Indigenous Peoples and communities. Part of Metro Vancouver's role in advancing reconciliation comes as a convener of local governments and provider of regional infrastructure and regional plans. Metro Vancouver's policies, plans and activities have an impact on Indigenous Peoples and communities across the region and can interact with First Nations' rights. Such as, Metro Vancouver considers reconciliation a strategic priority and commits to building and strengthening respectful and reciprocal relationships with First Nations across the region. Food and agricultural systems provide a new potential avenue for achieving shared outcomes with goals such as community health, clean air and water, healthy soil, and planning forward for the well-being of future generations.

Metro Vancouver is committed to engaging meaningfully with First Nations, and relating to Indigenous communities about Indigenous food systems can also align with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan, 2022 – 2027* and the goals and outcomes connected to food that have already been identified within it to uphold the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples (Figure 4). REF II

Part of Metro Vancouver's current role in supporting Indigenous food systems focuses on building stronger



relationships with First Nations by promoting ongoing dialogue and collaboration in a number of areas including cultural planning, co-operation agreements, and community-to-community forums. Metro Vancouver is also committed to meaningful engagement with First Nations, which provides opportunities for Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and priorities to contribute to Metro Vancouver's work. *Food Forward* highlights opportunities for Metro Vancouver to continue to work with Indigenous communities to learn about Indigenous approaches to food systems and explore potential areas of shared food system interests

Figure 4:
Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan, 2022 – 2027 - Food Related Goals and Outcomes

THEME 2. TITLE AND RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES	
GOAL: Indigenous Peoples exercise and have full enjoyment of their inherent rights, including the rights of First Nations to own, use, develop and control lands and resources within their territories in B.C.	OUTCOME: A British Columbia where: Indigenous Peoples have meaningful and sufficient access to abundant and healthy traditional foods and have peaceful enjoyment of their harvesting rights.
THEME 4. SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING	
GOAL: Indigenous Peoples in B.C. fully enjoy and exercise their distinct rights to maintain, control, develop, protect and transmit their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, languages, food systems, sciences and technologies.	OUTCOME: A British Columbia where: Indigenous food systems are recognized and supported in their foundational and interconnected role in providing for cultural, social, environmental and economic well-being.

WHAT METRO VANCOUVER CAN DO...

Metro Vancouver intersects with *Priority: Support Indigenous Food Systems* across all departments in its ongoing work to support reconciliation.



Actions best suited for Metro Vancouver include:

1. **Engagement** – continue to engage with local First Nations to better understand their unique needs, participate in food conversations, and explore appropriate avenues to support food sovereignty, including through pilot projects or food focused programs.
2. **Relationship Building** – host food-focused community-to-community forums, including cultural food events and storytelling initiatives.
3. **Knowledge and Understanding** – work with interested local First Nations to deepen relationships and grow understanding of how each First Nation defines food sovereignty for its community.
4. **Regional Parks** – in line with Strategy 3 of the *Regional Parks Plan* (2022) determine how regional parks may play a role in food sovereignty for local First Nations. 
5. **Public Awareness** – raise public awareness of Indigenous food systems and culture (e.g., native plant species tours, fish habitat management, signage and communications in Metro Vancouver Parks). 
6. **Urban Food Growing** – increase opportunities for urban Indigenous Peoples to establish traditional food growing opportunities on urban land across the region (e.g., create a Support Indigenous Food Security Grant).

WHAT OTHERS CAN DO...

Other jurisdictions that intersect with *Priority: Support Indigenous Food Systems* include provincial and local governments. Actions best suited for other jurisdictions include:

- * **Open Dialogue** – local governments can consider engaging with Indigenous communities through open and on-going dialogue to:
 - include Indigenous food sovereignty policies in their Official Community Plans and land use strategies
 - include cultural food needs in planning and service delivery
 - better understand the challenges Indigenous communities are facing with food security and develop actions to address those challenges
 - continue to find ways to advance reconciliation through projects and engagement
 - invest in and support food system infrastructure that economic barriers for Indigenous food producers (e.g., support provision of water for irrigation or public lands to highlight Indigenous food production)
 - use food and agriculture systems as portals for education about Indigenous cultures for staff and stakeholders.
- * **Indigenous Food Systems** – the Provincial government can continue to directly engage with Indigenous communities through open and on-going dialogue to:
 - co-develop food system strategies with Indigenous partners
 - facilitate intra-agency cooperation to build a supply to chain between Indigenous and non-Indigenous markets
 - identify opportunities to strengthen Indigenous food systems and increase Indigenous participation in the agriculture and food sector.

ADDRESS GOVERNANCE, DATA, AND EDUCATION GAPS

Food system issues span a complex set of sectors, all working to fulfill individual roles within a larger system. Due to this structure, government leadership is a necessity at all levels. And while each level of government - Federal, Provincial, Regional and Local - provides a separate level of intervention, collectively, they make up a structure on which an entire food system relies upon:

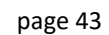
- * **Federal** – national and international issues related to trade, agriculture, fisheries, health, and food safety
- * **Provincial** – agriculture and health, economic growth, job creation, social welfare, transportation and the environment
- * **Regional** – regional utility services for water, wastewater and solid waste; regional planning, supporting complete communities, protecting agricultural and industrial lands, providing regional infrastructure and transportation
- * **Local** – community-level land use, utilities, community services, civil society groups.

Metro Vancouver's food system has a strong reliance on the BC Government to enable a policy, regulatory and fiscal framework. Partnerships with business, community organizations and educational institutions are also essential to advancing innovative solutions to address the challenges in the regional food system.

While the role of the BC Government is substantial, there are also distinctive roles for both Metro Vancouver and the member jurisdictions within the region. At the local level, each government has unique characteristics and circumstances and therefore address agriculture and food issues in their own way. Figure 5 illustrates ways in which local governments can internally organize and connect to food systems. For jurisdictions with significant agricultural land that play a crucial role in protecting farmland and promoting the viability of agriculture their departmental and decision-making structures will likely form and function quite differently compared to those without agricultural land, which are more focused on filling a supportive role of providing industrial and commercial land, and aligning their decision making with their large consumer base that is the target market for local farms and fisheries.

The overlapping nature of government jurisdictions and mandates affecting the food system, however, can result in policies and programs that unintentionally run counter to the development of a sustainable, resilient and healthy food system. Therefore, it is vital that all levels of government and their agencies engage in strategic and coordinated decision making, particularly in a region where there are 21 local governments, one Treaty First Nation and one Electoral Area. The use of systems thinking will be vital in supporting the vision, goals and strategic direction laid out in *Food Forward* and a commitment to collaboration in evaluating how to enable the expansion of local food production and the food sector in Metro Vancouver without compromising other social, economic and environmental objectives is also a necessity.

Food Forward: A Food System Strategy for Metro Vancouver



To do: ADD GRAPHIC SOURCE

ADD AS BREAK OUT BOX: add REF

Municipal Food Policy- Municipalities have limited jurisdictional authority over the food system, yet they are faced with the consequences of the loss of agricultural land, the local effects of pollution and climate change, farmers' financial struggles, residents' uneven access to food, food affordability, public health problems associated with inadequate or poor quality diets, shrinking local food infrastructure, and reduced employment and tax revenues from food-related businesses.

Municipalities intervene to address these consequences, sometimes intentionally, sometimes not, often employing food systems thinking. Fundamentally important for effective municipal food policy development is a strong attachment to the municipal government, active support from municipal staff, partnership between elected and unelected officials around a common purpose and mission, and food systems thinking. Food policy initiatives help leverage resources across their networks to support municipal projects such as community gardens, community kitchens, food box distribution schemes for low-income neighbourhoods, local and sustainable food procurement programs that support regional farmers, food hubs, and farmers' markets.

Three broad recommendations emerge from this scan of municipal and regional food policy initiatives across Canada:

1. There is a need for actors and organizations working in municipal food policy across Canada to create a network to share information and best practices and build capacity for food policy work.
2. Municipal food initiatives would benefit from identifying a range of ways to document and evaluate their work in order to demonstrate successful processes for social change as well as food system and other municipal/regional impacts.
3. Policy makers at various government levels should clarify jurisdictional food policy connections and define the linkages between municipal food policy efforts and provincial and federal food, agriculture, public health, and other policy domains.

Food policy is "any decision made by a government agency, business, or organization which affects how food is produced, processed, distributed, purchased and protected" (Hamilton, 2002, p. 423). Food policy work can take place at any scale. It can be legislative, regulatory, or visionary. But food policy is also about what is not said or done (Scherb et al., 2012): i.e., the social norms and assumptions embedded in our food systems over time.

The data strongly suggest that well-structured access to municipal councils, with some level of staff support and financing, leads to greater effectiveness, and that a more intimate attachment to government appears to generate greater access to resources (Borron, 2003; Harper et al., 2009). These conditions help ensure longevity, which is essential to this kind of work.

The most fundamental contribution of food policy initiatives is the creation of opportunities for discussions and action that would not typically occur. These initiatives often go on to develop feasible instruments of food system thinking – strategies, action plans, and food charters. These policy instruments help foster organizational motivation, cross-sectoral understanding, and the introduction of food systems approaches to municipalities.

WHAT METRO VANCOUVER CAN DO...

Metro Vancouver intersects with *Priority: Address Government and Education Gaps* across all departments but more specifically Regional Planning, Solid Waste, Water Services, Invest Vancouver, Regional Parks and school and youth programs.



Regional Planning



Invest Vancouver



Regional Parks



Water



Solid Waste



Actions best suited for Metro Vancouver include:

1. **Food Flows** – update *Food Flows* analysis to map how food moves through the region and expand its scope to consider climate vulnerabilities, natural hazards, and inter-regional dependencies (e.g., for food hubs and collective cold storage locations) **add REF**
2. **Supply Chain** – utilize the Agriculture and Food Databook to highlight the regional food system's functions by focusing on what food system assets exist, for each stage of the supply chain, across all areas of the region (e.g., ReFED Solution Database **add REF**)

WHAT OTHERS CAN DO...

Other jurisdictions that intersect with *Priority: Address Government and Education Gaps* include provincial and local governments. Actions best suited for other jurisdictions include:

- * **Local Leadership** – local governments can directly address governance, data and education gaps by:
 - using information on food systems to inform local decision making
 - establishing Agricultural and Food Security Advisory Committees to regularly update and connect with officials about the status of agriculture and food systems in their community
 - connecting member jurisdiction officials to local food businesses through tours or other avenues (e.g., farms, processing facilities) as part of the annual work plan, to increase understanding and generate support for food system projects
 - using number of farms and farm size statistics as indicators of a robust agricultural and food system sector and not just number of jobs or dollars of exports
 - reviewing local policy and zoning provisions to ensure food processing barriers are not only reduced but are specifically supported and elevated (see Figure 6: Local Government Food System Support Spectrum Checklist)
 - reducing local land use decision making barriers to permit food processing businesses
 - highlighting individuals and organizations that are already involved in local food systems, developed through events such as a Local Food Heroes award
 - developing incentives to increase local food production (e.g. coordinate permitting and licensing, support year-round farmers markets, provide honorariums for producers to participate in committees)
 - convening and facilitating collaboration across local governments and First Nations to advance food system resiliency (e.g. through committee work, site tours, and conversations around agriculture)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOOD SYSTEM SUPPORT SPECTRUM CHECKLIST

Figure 6 below provides a spectrum of options for how a regional food system can be supported by local government based on ease of achievement.

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

VERY HIGH

EASE OF ACHIEVEMENT

LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH
<p>No extensive decision making required</p> <p>No new budget allocations required</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>Some decision making required</p> <p>May/may not require additional budget allocations</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>In-depth decision making required</p> <p>May/may not require additional budget allocations</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>Complex decision making AND cooperation from others required</p> <p>New budget allocations required</p> <p>✓</p>
Add food-related general information, updates and reminders (e.g., local food procurement policies, best before date FAQs), into newsletters, training materials, staff resources, social media campaigns, and program materials on a consistent and regular basis.	Develop corporate policy to support "local food first" as a procurement strategy.	Establish specific, actionable food system goals for your organization.	Align corporate policies and practices to the defined city-wide food system vision.
Use websites and social media to provide examples of businesses using a "local food first" procurement strategy and include "how-to" suggestions for other businesses to do the same.	Provide readily available, sortable waste disposal bins for staff and customers (e.g., green recycling, garbage, reusables, soft plastics) with easy-to-understand signage directing appropriate use.	Define, through policies, regulations and guidelines, a city-wide food system vision.	
Integrate food policy into the Official Community Plan; include food system goals.	Support programs, outreach and educational opportunities for municipal staff and the community at-large about local agriculture and food systems.	Develop and adopt a local food plan and/or agricultural strategy.	
Adopt policies and regulations to protect farmland.	Include vertical, intensive, rooftop and indoor farms and gardens as permitted uses in urban areas.	Conduct a local community food assessment, including a food asset map and a food-supporting land inventory.	
Identify city-owned land for agricultural production.	Include beekeeping as an outright permitted use in appropriate urban zones.	Establish a program to utilize city-owned land for agricultural production with a focus on youth, new farmers and incubator opportunities.	
Identify municipal-level policies, regulations, programs and incentives that will support establishing or supporting a local fishing industry.	Establish a food policy council; include a City staff representative.	Establish corporate policy to consider food accessibility issues when making changes to transportation infrastructure, public transportation and development requests.	
Adjust zoning and regulatory bylaws to ensure front yard gardens are permitted.	Establish an Agricultural/Agricultural and Food Advisory Committee; include food considerations into the Terms of Reference.	Adjust existing policy and regulations to remove identified barriers to supporting agricultural production, distribution and sales.	
Provide information on the use of boulevards for gardening in urban areas.	Provide information on how to container garden or garden in small spaces in urban areas.	Provide dedicated staff to create and implement policies, programs and support for agriculture and food system businesses.	
Review existing policy and regulations to identify unintentional barriers to supporting agricultural production, distribution and sales.	Establish clear and accessible application processes and guidelines to allow for low-barrier food truck, farmer market and mobile food market business establishment.	Adopt and endorse policies and regulations that specifically support food system infrastructure including facilities for processing, aggregating and distributing food and labs needed for soil and food testing.	
	Adopt specific policies and regulations that directly address minimizing conversion of farmland to residential, commercial, industrial and recreational development.		
	Adjust zoning and regulatory bylaws to permit food trucks, farmer's markets, and mobile food markets.		

PART FOUR: PERFORMANCE

A Structure to Monitor, Review and Report

Performance Monitoring



PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Food systems are comprised of a complex mix of sectors making independent decisions toward a greater goal of bringing food from where it is produced to where it is consumed and to managing the associated generated waste. Food systems are not governed nor managed by one overarching entity, making it challenging to understand what interventions are helpful, lasting or effective.

Utilizing a monitoring framework with indicators is a performance evaluation method that allows for the ongoing analysis and understanding of how a food system is adapting and evolving over time as a direct result of the strategic actions imposed upon it. If developed and managed appropriately, a monitoring framework should provide a current reflection on the health of a food system and provide insights into what areas require nuanced attention.

Metro Vancouver routinely provides data on components of the regional food system including from Census of Agriculture, the Agricultural Land Use Inventory, solid waste, including food waste and potable water use. Utilizing these existing datasets, Metro Vancouver will be able to develop key performance indicators to evaluate how well Metro Vancouver is contributing to the overall vision of a regional food system established in Food Forward.

These key performance indicators will be provided in a new monitoring

framework through the *Agriculture & Food Data Book*. This Data Book is intended to be comprehensive and updated based on a 5-year period consistent with Census collection dates. The Data Book will be used to monitor the health of key aspects of the region's food system, particularly agricultural land use and equitable access to food across all member jurisdictions. Key performance indicators from the Data Book will also be shared through an electronic dashboard to make it accessible for member jurisdictions to utilize as needed.



While the *Food Forward* monitoring framework can be used to measure important components of Metro Vancouver's food system, it also represents an opportunity to share data beyond the scope of Metro Vancouver to provide a fulsome picture of all aspects of the food system operating in the region. Providing this other data will require on-going collaboration and agreements with other organizations, for example, health authorities, school districts and non-profit organizations. Samples of the types of data these organizations may be able to provide, as well as the data already provided by Metro Vancouver, are shown in Figure 7: Agriculture and Food Data Book – Performance Measures.

Figure 7: Agriculture and Food Data Book – Performance Measures

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DATA BOOK – PERFORMANCE MEASURES		
Census Reporting	ALUI Reporting	Food System Reporting
Total farm area (by Metro Vancouver, regions across the province, and provinces)	ALR land use type and location by member jurisdiction	Number of local government residents within the jurisdiction’s boundary with access to an urban agricultural garden.
Total number of farms (by Metro Vancouver, regions across the province, and provinces)	ALR parcel data – average size, area and location	Presence of local government policies and regulations that permit and promote agricultural production and processing within the jurisdiction.
Average farm size and distribution by farm size (by Metro Vancouver, regions across the province, and provinces)	Agriculture land cover data – type and location	Presence of a monitoring/evaluation mechanism for assembling and analyzing food system data to inform local government on food policy making.
Land Use on Farms (by Metro Vancouver, regions across the province, and provinces)	Farming uses by member jurisdiction	Annual proportion of urban organic waste collection re-used in agricultural production taking place within a local government boundary.
Farm Operators by Median Age; General Population by Median Age; Work Force by Median Age	Land Available for farming but not farmed by member jurisdiction	Number of local government food processing and distribution infrastructures available to food producers in the local government
Number of Farm Operators – all age groups, age groups of sole operators, age groups of two+ operators, gender all age groups, gender of sole operators, gender of two+ operators	Crops – main field, cultivated field, forage and pasture, berry and vegetable by member jurisdiction	Existence of policies/programs that address the reduction of GHG emissions in different parts of the food supply chain (e.g., processing, storage, transport, packaging, retail, cooking, waste disposal, etc.).
Farm workers – total and by paid work type	Greenhouses and crop barns by member jurisdiction	Costs of nutritious food at the community level.
Paid work hours – total and off- and on-farm hours	Livestock by member jurisdiction	Number of households living in “food deserts”.
Land tenure – number of farms, by hectare	Land use – used for farming, not used for farming by member jurisdiction	Presence of local government food-related policies and targets with a specific focus on socially vulnerable groups.

Gross annual farm receipts – total, distribution, per hectare	Residential, commercial, and industrial uses by member jurisdiction	Number of fresh fruit and vegetable outlets per 1000 inhabitants (markets and shops) supported by the local government.
Operating expenses and ratio		Annual local government investment in food markets or retail outlets providing fresh food to residents, as a proportion of total (investment) budget.
Total farm capital by input		Presence of food safety legislation and implementation and enforcement procedures.
Production – crop, greenhouse		Existence of support services for the informal food sector providing business planning, finance, development advice.
Farms direct marketing		Total annual volume of food losses and waste.
Production type – vegetable, fruit, livestock and poultry, farm animals, cannabis		Annual number of events and campaigns aimed at decreasing food loss and waste.
Succession planning		Presence of policies or regulations that address food waste prevention, recovery and redistribution.
Land management practices		Total annual volume of surplus food recovered and redistributed for direct human consumption.
Irrigation use – by farm and by hectare		Presence of a local government inter-departmental government body for advisory and decision-making of food policies and programs (e.g., interdepartmental food working group, dedicated food policy staff).
Manure use – by farm and by hectare		Presence of an active multi-stakeholder food policy and planning structure (e.g., food policy council, food coalition).
Farms selling organic products; organize product sales		Presence of a local government food policy or strategy and/or action plans.
		Presence of an inventory of local food initiatives and practices to guide

		development and expansion of local government food policy and programs.
		Existence of a food supply emergency/ food resilience management plan for the local government (e.g., response to natural disasters, vulnerabilities in food production, transport and access; social-economic shocks, etc.) based on a vulnerability assessment.

DATA COLLABORATIONS		
Health Authorities	School Districts	Business and Non-Profits
Percentage of food insecure households based on the <u>Food Insecurity Experience Scale</u> (FIES).	Percentage of children and youth under 18 years of age benefitting from school feeding programs.	Number of community-based food assets in the region.
Proportion of food procurement expenditure by public institutions on food from sustainable, ethical sources, and shorter (local/regional) supply chains.	Proportion of food procurement expenditure by public institutions on food from sustainable, ethical sources, and shorter (local/regional) supply chains.	Number of formal jobs related to the regional food system that pay at least the national minimum or living wage.
Presence of programs/policies promoting the availability of nutritious and diversified foods in public facilities.		Presence of a development plan to strengthen resilience and efficiency of local food supply chain logistics.
		Proportion of local/regional food producers selling their products to public markets.
		Number of local government food processing and distribution infrastructures available to food producers in the local government

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APPENDICES

A – Terms and Acronyms

C – Engagement Overview

D – Member Jurisdiction Highlights

E – Audit: Regional Food System Strategy (2011)



APPENDIX A – TERMS AND ACRONYMS

MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Food
ALC	Agricultural Land Commission
Community kitchens	refer to groups that cook together and share what they make in a friendly social atmosphere. Establishing community kitchens can help to improve the health and nutrition of those involved while strengthening community ties.
Ecosystem services	refer to the basics of life provided by natural systems and biodiversity.
Food hubs	are centrally located facilities that bring together a full spectrum of activities and programs to support sustainable urban food systems.
Food policy	is any governance decision, plan or regulation that affects the ways that food is produced, allocated, obtained, consumed or disposed.
Food processing	is the transformation of food from its raw state into something that can be stored or eaten. It ranges from basic processing like grading and bagging fresh foods to developing highly refined and packaged foods.
Food production	refers to the farming and gardening practices that produce the raw food products – fruits, vegetables, grain, legumes, meat, eggs, dairy products and fish.
Food recovery programs	involve taking good and healthy food products considered surplus or not marketable by food industry standards and redirecting it to food programs who redistribute it to individuals and households in need. Well designed they can address food safety issues, improve the food access, and reduce food waste.
Food safety	refers to efforts to ensure that food is handled, prepared, and stored in ways that prevent contamination of food by bacteria, viruses and parasites. Common causes of food borne illnesses in Canada include Red Tide, Listeria, Salmonella and E. Coli.
Food sector	encompasses the range of food-related businesses including farms, ranches and fishing operations, food product manufacturing, farm and food product wholesaling and distribution, food and beverage stores, and food and beverage services.
Food security	exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy lifestyle.
Food system	is the sequence of activities linking food production, processing, distribution and access, consumption and waste management as well as all the associated supporting and regulatory institutions and activities. A local or regional food system operates within a designated geographic area.
Local food	is food produced or processed within a particular geographic boundary. For this document, local food refers to food grown and harvested in British Columbia.
Local food economy	includes the production and consumption of food within a particular geographic boundary. On the production side, it consists of all businesses involved in producing, harvesting, distribution and retailing of food products. On the consumption side, it includes households and institutions, such as hospitals, which feed people as part of their operations.

Resilience	is the amount of change a system can undergo, or its capacity to absorb disturbance, and still be able to retain the same function, services, structure and feedbacks.
Supply chain	activities transform natural resources and raw materials into a finished product that is delivered to the final consumer. In a conventional supply chain, competition along the supply chain act to maximize their own return.
Supply management	systems have been organized in some agriculture sectors; for instance, dairy, poultry and eggs. The objective is to match the quantity supplied of specific farm products to consumption levels within a geographic area at stable prices that ensures a fair return to farmers. Managing supply involves quotas that control production from farmers involved, penalties for over or under production, and tariffs that control imports.
Urban agriculture	is the practice of producing food within cities that encompasses a broad range of initiatives and production models that share the objective of providing urban residents access to fresh food grown in backyard gardens, roof top gardens, community gardens and urban farms.
Value chain	refers to a supply chain where the relationship among firms is more intentional than in a conventional one. The cooperation and partnerships among the firms in a value chain are to provide products for a niche market or to address challenges the firms involved have in responding to market demands or producing at a scale that is profitable.
NGO	Non-government Organization

APPENDIX B – ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

As part of the process to update the *Regional Food System Strategy*, Metro Vancouver retained Upland Agricultural Consulting, WCS Engagement + Planning and Urban Food Strategies to conduct various engagement sessions to connect with food system-interest holders to understand their individual issues, perspectives, challenges and successes. These individual sectors were also brought together during an All Sector Forum to brainstorm on these issues and provide input into the update process. This engagement input was used to inform the preparation of *Food Forward*.

Update Process

The process to update the *Regional Food System Strategy* undertook a multi-year, multi-phased approach. Each phase contributed to the understanding of the complexity of the regional food system in this region and highlighted the inter-dependent and collaborative efforts necessary to achieve the vision, goals and actions laid out in this Strategy.



Engagement Summary

Metro Vancouver created multiple opportunities to connect with all sectors of the regional food system through interviews, an on-line survey, in-person and virtual workshops, utilizing a project advisory committee, and hosting an all-sector forum. Metro Vancouver also sought input from ten local First Nations. Connections were made with most of the sectors comprising the regional food system including farmers, processors, distributors, consumers and health authorities and with businesses and organizations involved in marketing, retail, food service, packaging and waste management.

Through these engagement initiatives, Metro Vancouver staff were able to connect with passionate residents and business owners who care deeply about maintaining the long-term viability and health of this region's food system. This commitment to finding solutions to some of the most pressing challenges of the Metro Vancouver food system was evident in the broad participation rate and the input received throughout the entire engagement period. Engagement results also illustrated that there is interest from across the country in this food system work as some of the highest website traffic originated from Toronto and Quebec City.

Of the 1,104 visitors to the *Regional Food System Strategy* update page, the highest traffic locally came from Vancouver, Surrey and Burnaby. Over 70 people downloaded the *Regional Food System Strategy* and *Action Plan* documents and 1,824 people opened the newsletter links providing information about the Strategy update. Over 125 people participated in the 2024 engagement survey, 51 people attended the All-Sector Forum, 38 people attended on-line workshops, 24 people attended in-person workshops and 16 organizations participated in one-one interviews.



CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

- * **ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND MARKET DYNAMICS** – High costs of land, food, labour, rent and inputs were common themes here. Differences between small- and large-scale producers were also highlighted, particularly differences in competitive advantages depending on if funding is sourced locally or from overseas. Specific gaps identified for the processing industry which impact the diversity of the regional food system and its ability to provide local food to local residents.
- * **POLICY AND GOVERNANCE** – Highlighted a need for local leadership and supporting agricultural land for agricultural purposes. Acknowledgement that food systems are complex that require multi-jurisdictional collaboration and funding to support.
- * **CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT IMPACT** – While also identified as a potential strength, climate impacts are currently more negatively affecting the regional food system including from extreme weather events and decreasing soil quality.
- * **EDUCATION AND CONSUMER AWARENESS** – Lack of knowledge about where food comes from, how to prepare and cook food and the value of food in general were consistent challenges raised by engagement participants.
- * **INDIGENOUS CONSIDERATIONS** – Recognition there is more engagement needed with Indigenous and First Nations communities to understand their needs and support their distinct journeys to food security and sovereignty.
- * **INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROCESSING** – A key recurring challenge for the regional food system in general is the loss of processing infrastructure and the significant barriers, such as land costs, lack of access to markets for small operations, complex permitting requirements, and lack of available space, that are standing in the way of developing a flourishing processing sector in this region.
- * **LABOUR AND HOUSING** – Labour shortages in all areas of the regional food system is an ongoing challenge. Lack of affordable housing, transportation and health care access are barriers to attracting labour, particularly for younger farmers. High dependency on temporary foreign workers.



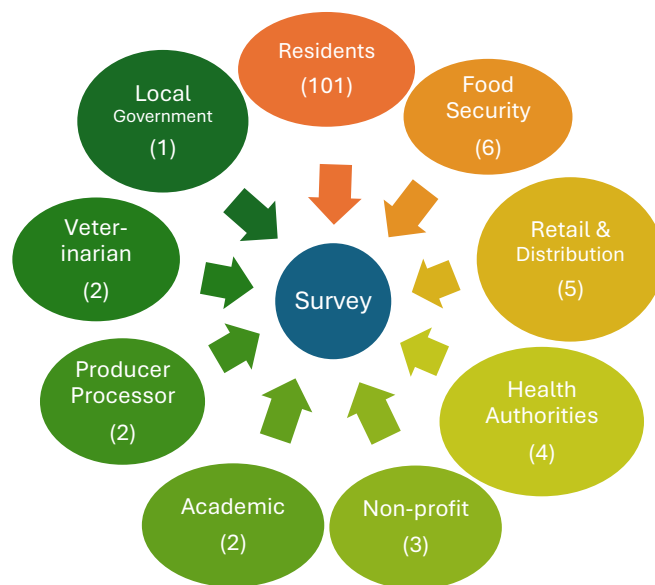
HOW METRO VANCOUVER CAN SUPPORT

- * **POLICY ADVOCACY AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT** – Continue with advocacy supporting agricultural uses on agricultural land, incorporating food security into climate change mitigation and adaption plans, policies and frameworks, and demonstrating leadership to drive agriculturally-supportive policy. A specific role in water costs and availability for farmers was also identified for Metro Vancouver.
 - * **EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS** – Highlight a general need to provide information for residents and decision makers in order to make more informed decisions about food.
 - * **TRUST-BUILDING AND ENGAGEMENT** – Highlighted a need to continue to build trust and relationships between individual food system sectors and all interested parties.
 - * **AGRICULTURAL RESILIENCE** – Focus for Metro Vancouver was on developing infrastructure and policies to ensure long-term water availability for local farming and to support increasing resilience of agricultural sector.
 - * **COLLABORATION, DATA AND RESEARCH** – Identified as a critical element to support a healthy, well-functioning regional food system was the need for data. Consistent themes focused on assisting non-profits to collect and manage data, standardizing data, and prioritizing filling in the extensive data gaps that exist for the food system as a whole.
 - * **FARMER AND FARM WORKER HOUSING** – Advocacy specific to supporting temporary farm workers was highlighted here.
 - * **INCENTIVES AND SUPPORT** – Highlighted need to launch ambitious campaigns to promote local food and a circular food economy. Data-driven solutions were identified as priorities for action and advocacy.
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** – Focus was on developing a regional brand for local produce, making the region more appealing for food processors, boosting food hub success, and advocacy on promoting retail sales of local produce.

A short survey was developed to target those involved in the regional agriculture and food sector. This survey helped develop an understanding of the issues, perspectives, challenges and successes individual food system sectors have experienced over the past 10-15 years.

Overall, respondents highlighted four main areas of concern:

1. Protecting agricultural land for agricultural purposes
2. Diversify local crops and increase local food consumption
3. Concern over rising food costs
4. Climate change impacts on food sector overall.



ALL SECTOR FORUM

ATTENDEES

- * Provincial (Ministry of Agriculture, Public Health Association of BC)
- * Local Government (Richmond, Pitt Meadows, Vancouver, Burnaby, Delta, Surrey, New Westminster)
- * Health Authority (Vancouver Coastal Health, Fraser Health)
- * Agri-Food Sector (BC Dairy, Pattison Food Group, Green Chain Consulting, QuantoTech Solutions, Skipper Otto)
- * Indigenous Organizations (Vancouver Urban Forest Foundation)
- * NGOs (Second Harvest, Poverty Reduction BC, Food Link Society, Food Banks BC, Urban Bounty, BC Farmers Markets, Food Stash, United Way BC, Seeds of Change Surrey)
- * Academia (UBC, LaSalle College)

CIRCULAR FOOD ECONOMY MEETING

ATTENDEES

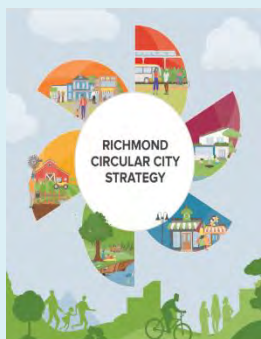
- * Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers
- * Nature's Path Organic Foods
- * BetterTable
- * FreshPrep
- * Vancouver Airport Authority
- * TerraForma Systems
- * SFU Food Systems Lab
- * Circular Innovation Council (COIL)
- * BC Ministry of Environment and Parks (Circular Communities Team)
- * Sodexo Canada

- Support Indigenous leadership and participation in food conversations and planning processes
- Increase Indigenous people's access food growing opportunities
- Raise public awareness of Indigenous food systems and culture
- Convene and facilitate collaboration across local all levels of government, including with First Nations
- Develop a better understanding of food production and the supply chain to better inform solutions to challenges
- Enhance learning opportunities about food systems at all levels, including K-12, higher education, peer-to-peer learning
- Continue to promote Love Food Hate Waste, create a food waste prevention working group and promote circular economy in food systems
- Facilitate policy updates in member jurisdictions to include access to food
- Expand access to food growing land and infrastructure
- Integrate food system circularity into policies and regulations as needed

- Develop a centre for recoverable food that is affordable
- Determine costs to transport wasted food
- Work with food sector to establish a consistent and specific market for 'ugly' food to reduce food waste
- Share success stories and case studies about food businesses
- Create programs and events that provide visibility and financial support for farmers (e.g., Ugly Potato Day)
- Follow the "COIL model" of creating a collaborative information sharing system amongst different sectors of the regional food system
- Include food into climate policies, strategies and actions
- Improve data availability on food loss and waste types, drivers and potential end state
- Better define individual players in food chain and their roles
- Protect agricultural land for agricultural purposes
- Need convener / coordinator leadership to activate existing ideas and actions
- Review existing circular food system work to find out what worked / did not work
- Increase infrastructure to maximize food rescue and redistribution
- Mandatory waste separation legislation needed

APPENDIX C – MEMBER JURISDICTION HIGHLIGHTS

Every community within Metro Vancouver contributes to the function of the regional food system, whether it be from lands for growing food, districts for processing, warehousing and distribution of food, areas with major transportation facilities or zoning that permits community kitchens, community gardens and food banks. Many of these systems and uses would not be possible without the support of the member jurisdictions and the policies, programs, and projects they support individually to make up a collective robust and diverse regional food system. While not an extensive list, the following works highlighted below were used to inform the preparation of *Food Forward*.



Richmond Circular City Strategy (2023)

This Strategy places the City at the forefront of enabling a

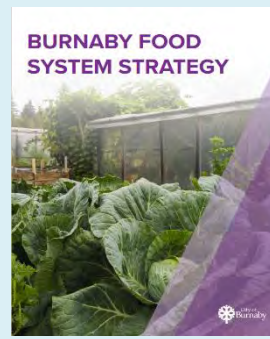
transition to a circular economy by integrating new and existing policies, building capacities, collaborating and engaging stakeholders, and stimulating innovation and participation across the food system, business, mobility, built environment and materials management sectors.



Delta Agricultural Plan (2023)

Delta's 2023 Agricultural Plan

focuses on uncovering practical solutions to challenges and identifies opportunities to strengthen farming to ultimately contribute the community's long-term sustainability.



Burnaby Food System Strategy (2022)

The Burnaby Food System Strategy

(BFSS) has been developed within this larger understanding of the vital role that food plays in our lives. It seeks to outline the ways through which the City of Burnaby can take action and support community efforts towards sustainable food systems and food security for all people in Burnaby.



Grown in Pitt Meadows: Our Agricultural Viability Strategy (2023)

The aim of the Strategy is

to provide a comprehensive agricultural planning document that identifies opportunities to strengthen the local agriculture and agrifood sector and contribute to its long-term sustainability. The Strategy recommends actions specific to Pitt Meadows to support municipal planning efforts in the short (1-2 year) to long term (6+ years) timeframe.



Delta Social Action Plan (2023-2028)

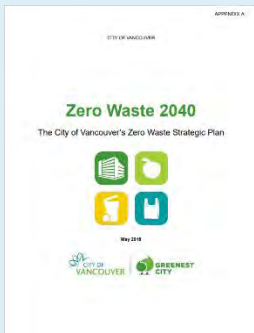
The new Social Action Plan creates a strategic framework and guides the City's policy interventions, decisions and resource allocations in social planning over a five-year timeframe.



Parkland in Surrey's ALR (2022)

This Plan provides recommendations for managing

parks in the ALR as well as broader recommendations for agricultural planning and the integration of ecosystem services. In creating the plan, this project also examined the role that farming activities within parks play in the agricultural economy, in creating educational and recreational opportunities, and connecting the dots between natural areas and ecosystems services.

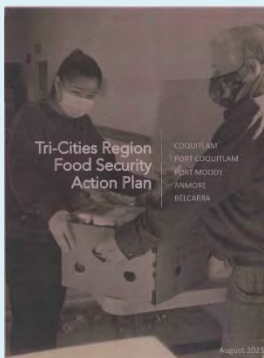


Vancouver Zero Waste 2040 Strategic Plan/Circular Food Innovation Lab (2022-2023)

Zero Waste 2040 is a long term strategic vision for Vancouver as

a community to achieve the goal of zero waste by 2040. It will help guide future decisions and investments relating to solid waste and identifies areas where the City can play a role in stimulating community, economic and societal changes needed to achieve the goal of zero waste.

The Circular Food Innovation Lab project undertook an innovation process to more deeply understand and experiment around the complex challenge of reducing wasted food and increasing circularity in Vancouver's food sector.



Tri-Cities Food Security Action Plan (2021)

The Tri-Cities Region (City of Coquitlam, City of Port

Coquitlam, City of Port Moody, Village of Anmore and Village of Belcarra) embarked upon its first Food Security Action Plan to provide recommendations and guidance for community food security and household food insecurity in the region. The Action Plan provides clear direction for local government in the Tri-Cities Region to ensure that food security policies and initiatives are innovative, collaborative, and aligned.



City of Vancouver Local Systems Food Action Plan (2021)

The 2021

Local Systems Food Action Plan represents a shift in priority from increasing the number of assets and services in parks and facilities to improving access and equitable delivery of these assets and services. It reflects a deeper understanding of how historical and social contexts impact the local food system in Vancouver and takes into account broader issues such as ongoing colonialism and barriers to Indigenous food sovereignty, rising rates of food insecurity, the climate emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic.



Richmond Farming First Strategy (2021)

The Richmond Farming First Strategy

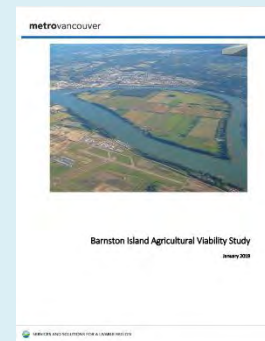
includes themes, objectives and policies to guide decisions on the land use management of agricultural land, enhance public awareness of agriculture and food security issues, and strengthen agricultural viability in Richmond.



Toward a Resilient Food System for Bowen Island – Agrarian Analysis (2019)

This study presents the history of

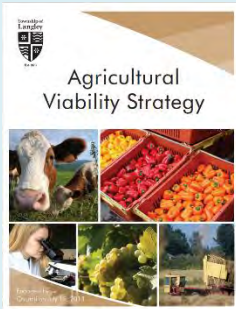
farming on Bowen Island, explores how the community can move toward a more resilient, local food system, and recommends opportunities for building food system resilience by identifying climate change mitigations and adaptations.



Barnston Island Agricultural Viability Study (2019)

The Barnston Island Agricultural

Viability Study was prepared to: 1) create a baseline of information about agriculture on Barnston Island including: land use, land cover, soil type, soil class, current farm activities, drainage and irrigation, access and transportation constraints; 2) engage with stakeholders to understand challenges facing farming, and what can be done to encourage farming on the island; 3) determine what types of farm uses are best suited for Barnston Island based; 4) identify and prioritize specific actions to increase the long-term viability of agriculture and actively farmed land; and 5) seek integration opportunities with other initiatives.



Langley Township Agricultural Viability Strategy (2013)

The Agricultural

Viability Strategy identifies ways the Township of Langley can proactively support agricultural development leading to more local food production, more full-time employment, and more sustainable development as envisioned in the Township's Sustainability Charter. The Agricultural Viability Strategy was designed to assist the Township in achieving its agricultural potential.



Tsawwassen First Nation Agricultural Plan (2013)

The Agricultural Plan is meant to provide a framework as

well as a roadmap for scəwəθən məsteyəx^w to pursue its vision and objectives regarding the management of its agricultural land resources. The Plan sets out Guiding Principles, a Vision and Objectives for what it wants to achieve. The Agricultural Plan also lays out an Implementation Strategy that sets priorities and tasks for making the plan a reality.



North Shore Community Food Charter (2013)

Co-developed by the District of North Vancouver, the City of

North Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver, the North Shore Community Food Charter is a high-level, locally developed policy tool that combines broad action goals to help guide and implement food policy.



Surrey Agriculture Protection and Enhancement Strategy (2013)

The purpose of the Surrey Agriculture Protection and Enhancement Strategy is to: 1) identify key priorities and actions for enhancing the growth and vitality of the agriculture sector in Surrey; 2) ensure the sustainability and resilience of the agri-food sector in Surrey in the face of a changing future, responding to a changing climate, changing markets and changing technology; and 3) reinforce and complement the BC Agrifoods Strategy and to direct actions at the local government level.



What Feeds Us: Vancouver Food Strategy (2013)

The Vancouver Food Strategy is the result of consultations, analysis and

applying lessons learned from other municipal food strategies. It is intended 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 progress.



District of North Vancouver Edible Garden Project (2005)

This is beginning to change, and the Edible Garden

Project has been a leader in developing partnerships and empowering community members to supply high quality, nutritious, fresh fruits and vegetables to those most in need in our community. Starting with a simple backyard veggie patch, we have grown to over 5,000 square meters (~1.25 acres) of urban garden spaces. We have transformed yards, roof-tops, alleys, schoolyards, boulevards, abandoned spaces, and parks into edible landscapes and community hubs. When we activate the spaces around our homes, schools, and workplaces they become places where we like to gather, talk, share, and learn.

APPENDIX D – AUDIT: REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM STRATEGY (2011)

An audit of the *Regional Food System Strategy* was conducted in the Fall of 2023 to determine the completion status of all action items. Many action items were identified to be out of the authority of Metro Vancouver, several action items represent work conducted on a yearly or continual basis, and others have not been completed. This audit was used to inform the preparation of *Food Forward*.

Recommendation	Responsibility	Complete	Not Complete	On-going	Unknown	Comment
Goal 1: Increase Capacity to Produce Food Close to Home						
1.1 Protect agricultural land for food production						
Work with the Agricultural Land Commission to protect the region's agricultural land base through the Regional Growth Strategy.	Metro Vancouver					Metro 2050, the regional growth strategy, supports protecting agricultural land for agricultural production by setting the target of containing 98% of the region's growth to areas within the Urban Containment Boundary.
Work with the Agricultural Land Commission to protect the agricultural land base.	Member Jurisdictions					On-going through policies in Metro 2050.
Work with the Province to strengthen the role and responsibility of the Agricultural Land Commission and provide adequate resources for this work.	Provincial Government					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role.
The Ministry of Agriculture develops farm homeplate standards to limit the impact of residential uses in the ALR.	Ministry of Agriculture and Food					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role.
Reduce agricultural land speculation by applying value capture mechanisms for the benefit and compensation of agriculture when ALR land is excluded or converted to non- farm use.	Agricultural Land Commission					Include in the RFSS Update: advocacy to province for changes to tax structure for agricultural properties to reduce incentives for non-farm use development in the ALR.
1.2 Restore fish habitat and protect sustainable sources of seafood						
Support hatcheries on the Capilano, Seymour and Serpentine Rivers, as well as the Kanaka, Noons, Crippen, and Hyde Creeks to augment existing low salmon runs in the region.	Metro Vancouver					Metro Vancouver regularly supports these hatcheries, including Tynnehead.
Implement the Integrated Liquid Waste and Resource Management Plan (ILWRP) that will, through sewage treatment upgrades and source controls, reduce the amount of contaminant loadings entering the Fraser River and surrounding marine waters.	Metro Vancouver					The Liquid Waste Management Plan is currently being updated to reflect a changing climate and changing needs of the regional district.
Complete Integrated Stormwater Management Plans (ISMPs) that will improve the health of urban streams.	Member Jurisdictions					A number of municipalities in MV have developed ISMPs including: West Vancouver, Surrey, Maple Ridge, Port Moody, City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, and Township of Langley.
The Department of Fisheries and Oceans should continue to ensure that the management of fisheries and aquaculture in B.C. provides for the long-term sustainability and abundance of native stocks.	Department of Fisheries and Oceans					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role.
1.3 Enable expansion of agricultural production						
Monitor and maintain indicators and other measures related to trends in agricultural land and food production in the region and publish the results.	Metro Vancouver					The Agricultural Land Use Inventory (ALUI) is conducted approximately every 5 years and is the best mechanism for tracing these measures.
The Provincial government to implement new policy rules for the assessment of farmland that improve the competitive position of the province's farm sector, provide incentives to farm	Provincial Government					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role.

Recommendation	Responsibility	Complete	Not Complete	On-going	Unknown	Comment
agricultural land, and support sustainable agricultural practices.						
The federal government could create an independent regulatory body, a migrant worker commission, to investigate and address the challenges of Canada's labour migration programs and protect Canada's legacy as a fair and just society.	Federal Government					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role.
1.4 Invest in a new generation of food producers						
Establish a small number of incubator farms on Metro Vancouver lands to provide new farmers with a site to start their business.	Metro Vancouver					Some incubator farms have been created throughout the region.
1.5 Expand commercial food production in urban areas						
Develop zoning by-laws and guidelines for commercial urban agriculture.	Member Jurisdictions					Some member jurisdictions have completed this; others are under preparation.
Goal 2: Improve the Financial Viability of the Food Sector						
2.1 Increase the capacity to process, warehouse and distribute local foods						
Create a B.C. Agri Food Centre website that provides agricultural and food businesses with access to research and expertise on new production technologies, product development, marketing and operational management.	Ministry of Agriculture and Food					Website Link
Through the pooling of private and public resources, create an Agricultural Trust Fund that provides funding and loan pool for improving the viability of sustainable farming and food processing in the region.	Member Jurisdictions					
Establish a Centre of Excellence for Food Technology similar to what exists in other provinces.	Provincial Government					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role.
2.2 Include local foods in the purchasing policies of large public institutions						
Commit to buying more local food.	Metro Vancouver					Food procurement at Metro Vancouver Head Office is run by a 3 rd party operator that makes an effort to purchase local and have internal training to help staff achieve this; one main supplier also has a buy local guide .
	Healthcare authorities, universities and school boards					Out of the jurisdiction of MV but can be revised to an advocacy role in updated RFSS.
	Member Jurisdictions					Out of the jurisdiction of MV but can be revised to an advocacy role to account for the jurisdictional power of MV. City of Vancouver prioritizes local food purchasing in public facilities.
2.4 Further develop value chains within the food sector						
Provide on-going support for Investment Agriculture Foundation's B.C. Value Chain Initiative.	Provincial Government					Out of the jurisdiction of MV
2.5 Review government policies and programs to ensure they enable the expansion of the local food sector						
Review existing policies to ensure that they are consistent with the vision of the Regional Food System Strategy.	Metro Vancouver					Examine including in updated RFSS as part of updated RFSS performance monitoring.
	Member Jurisdictions					Examine including in updated RFSS as part of performance monitoring.
	Provincial gov and Provincial organizations					Out of the jurisdiction of MV

Recommendation	Responsibility	Complete	Not Complete	On-going	Unknown	Comment
Develop and implement municipal plans and strategies that promote and support the viability of agriculture as appropriate.	Member Jurisdictions					Many member jurisdictions in the region have developed or are in the process of developing plans and strategies to support the viability of agriculture including: Delta, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Richmond, Surrey, Township of Langley.
Goal 3: People Make Healthy and Sustainable Food Choices						
3.1 Enable residents to make healthy food choices						
Advocate for the reinstatement of provincial support for the “Buy B.C.” campaign.	Metro Vancouver					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role.
Invigorate and expand the “Buy B.C.” campaign.	Provincial Government					The province has been active in promoting the “Buy B.C.” campaign, with several videos released in the past 4 years and the “Buy B.C.” webpage updated annually. Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role.
Require better nutritional quality information on packaged and prepared foods through labeling or other innovative technologies.	Provincial Government					Out of the jurisdiction of MV.
Maintain the Food Security Gateway website that provides individuals and community groups with information on making “healthy eating the easy choice” and building food secure communities.	Provincial Government					Website is inactive. Out of the jurisdiction of MV.
3.2 Communicate how food choices support sustainability						
Engage in activities that will increase awareness within the region of the different aspects of the food system including video programs produced by Greater Vancouver TV and regional dialogues.	Metro Vancouver					Metro Vancouver continues to support the Agriculture Awareness Grants and produces agriculture awareness videos .
Continue to provide funding for the annual Agriculture Awareness grant program for non-profit organizations within Metro Vancouver.	Metro Vancouver					Metro Vancouver continues to support the Agriculture Awareness Grants and produces agriculture awareness videos .
Develop innovative social marketing campaigns that support better food choices.	Provincial Government; Non-Government Organizations					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role.
Develop common messaging that links consumption of local foods to the viability of agriculture, fishing, and food production in the region.	Provincial Government; Non-Government Organizations					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role.
3.3 Enhance food literacy and skills in schools						
Co-host an annual conference for groups working on food issues within the region. The conference would provide an opportunity to share knowledge, develop skills and connect with others.	Metro Vancouver					Feast of Fields and Zero Waste conference are supported by Metro Vancouver.
Provide support to community groups working on food issues within their municipalities.	Non-Government Organizations; Member Jurisdictions					Several member jurisdictions have incorporated support for community groups and Non-Government Organizations working on food issues into their food security strategies or plans.
Continue and expand the educational programs delivered by the BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation that provides teachers with high quality print and video resources as well as programs in the schools such as Spuds in Tubs and Take a Bite of B.C.	BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role and continued support through Agricultural Awareness Grants program.

Recommendation	Responsibility	Complete	Not Complete	On-going	Unknown	Comment
Develop creative school programs that will engage students and their families to increase the amount of fruits and vegetables they consume.	School Districts; Non-Government Organizations					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role.
3.4 Celebrate the taste of local foods and the diversity of cuisines						
Create special events and programs in regional parks throughout the growing season to highlight in-season produce and provide opportunities for direct marketing of local foods.	Metro Vancouver					Country Celebration was discontinued in 2020. Include in the RFSS Update: opportunity to update Public Programming Strategy (2020) to focus on food; potential opportunity to connect with local First Nations to support programs highlighting traditional foods.
Support and promote farm tours that highlight farms, farm-gate vendors, open air markets, eateries, heritage sites and fairs in the Lower Mainland.	Member Jurisdictions					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role; but has potential to be relevant for Metro Vancouver if revised.
Expand the number of events celebrating local harvests and the diversity of cuisines within a municipality.	Member Jurisdictions					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role; but has potential to be relevant for Metro Vancouver if revised.
Goal 4: Everyone has Access to Healthy, Culturally Diverse and Affordable Food						
4.1 Improve access to nutritious food among vulnerable groups						
Advocate for sufficient funding and effective programs for ensuring all of the region's residents can be properly fed.	Metro Vancouver					On-going advocacy role for Metro Vancouver.
Work with tenant associations in Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation complexes to establish community kitchen facilities and gardens.	Metro Vancouver					Community Building Programs Community Gardens and Healthy living programming are occurring; community kitchens need to be confirmed.
Evaluate the opportunities for using facilities in community centres for community kitchens.	Member Jurisdictions					Communities such as Vancouver, Putt Meadows and North Vancouver District and Family Services of Greater Vancouver provide support in this area. Out of the jurisdiction of Metro Vancouver – but has potential to be relevant if revised.
Develop and implement programs, with sufficient funding, that improve food access for low-income households and other vulnerable populations.	Provincial Government					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role.
Collaborate on the development of neighborhood precincts where community members share and learn skills on how to grow and cook fresh foods and share information on food issues.	Community Boards					Out of the jurisdiction of MV.
4.2 Encourage urban agriculture						
Identify municipal lands that could be used for community gardens.	Member Jurisdictions					Many municipalities within MV have worked to identify municipal land which can be used for community gardens as well as leased to farmers, such municipalities include: Surrey , City of Vancouver , Burnaby , Delta , City of North Van . Can be revised for MV to support municipalities in seeking additional land for community gardens.
4.3 Enable non-profit organizations to recover nutritious food						
Advocate for revisions in food safety regulations and requirements that would enable the redistribution of safe, nutritious and edible foods.	Metro Vancouver					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role.

Recommendation	Responsibility	Complete	Not Complete	On-going	Unknown	Comment
Goal 5: A Food System Consistent with Ecological Health						
5.1 Protect and enhance ecosystem goods and services						
Evaluate potential programs that could be used to compensate farmers for the ecological goods and services that agricultural land provides.	Provincial Government, Non-Government Organizations					Metro Vancouver's PESPAL project examined existing programs. Can be revised to support additional phases of work under PESPAL.
Protect and enhance all significant wetlands, including riparian areas, streams, and inter- tidal habitats, that support fish and other seafood populations.	Provincial Government					Out of the jurisdiction of MV – advocacy role.
5.2 Reduce waste in the food system						
Initiate pilot projects to reduce the use of disposable take-out food and beverage packaging, plastic and disposable bags in the commercial sector.	Metro Vancouver					Ongoing work through Zero Waste Council
Advocate for food packaging requirements that meet food safety regulations, maintain product quality and reduce the amount of waste in municipal collection systems.	Metro Vancouver					Ongoing work through Zero Waste Council
Work with event organizers to implement waste minimization and improve recycling at community festivals, sporting events, conferences and trade shows. Best practices will be documented in a toolkit.	Metro Vancouver					Metro Vancouver published a Green Best Practices for Events in Regional Parks handbook. Progress could still be made for indoor events.
5.3 Facilitate adoption of environmentally sustainable practices						
Initiate pilot projects for farm-based anaerobic digestors to provide alternative energy sources for farms and other uses.	Provincial Government					Largely out of the jurisdiction of MV – but advocacy and potential joint project could be developed with the Province.
5.4 Prepare for the impacts of climate change						
Maintain dikes to protect urban and agricultural lands.	Member Jurisdictions					Some municipalities in Metro Vancouver have made commitments as well as real progress on dike maintenance in the face of rise sea levels. Largely out of the jurisdiction of MV – but advocacy and potential joint project could be developed with member jurisdictions.
Implement an effective and equitable plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the agriculture sector that includes a valuation of carbon sequestration on some agricultural lands.	Provincial Government					Climate 2050 – Agriculture – provides some direction. Work that has been done at a provincial level. Largely out of the jurisdiction of MV – but advocacy and potential joint project could be developed with agricultural sector and the Province.

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