

# **A Seat at The Table:** *Resource guide for local governments to promote food secure communities*

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## Introduction: What's on the Table?

Local governments in BC play a unique and vital role in creating healthy and sustainable communities. They dedicate their time, resources and energy to creating sustainable economies, environmentally aware and safe places, and communities of healthy, active and engaged citizens — tasks that are becoming more challenging each day.

Food insecurity is growing, as evidenced by the increasing demand on food banks in Canada over the past decades.<sup>1</sup> Given Canada's rich and ready supply of food, this points to issues of poverty and inequality. BC has the highest rate of child poverty in the country — at 23 percent<sup>2</sup> — and at the same time, more than half of British Columbians are overweight or obese.<sup>3</sup> Poor diet and lack of exercise also contribute to chronic illnesses such as Type 2 Diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. Up to 30 percent of all chronic diseases are related to poor nutrition.<sup>4</sup>

The trends are also troubling on the production side. In Canada, net farm incomes are in decline and plunged to their lowest level in more than 25 years in 2003.<sup>5</sup> The number of farms and the finite amount of farmland is being eroded by development and environmental pressures. Producers are faced with rising fuel prices for farming and transporting goods. Chemicals used in the production of food are contaminating water and soil, and further threaten declining fish stocks.<sup>6</sup> Add to this the unpredictable impact of climate change.

Local food systems do not exist in isolation from provincial, national and international systems. Governments across Canada are working to address these issues, but it isn't easy. Food and materials are imported and

This resource guide is designed to assist local governments promote food security and support food systems in BC. It showcases a sample of the wide range of innovative projects being developed or supported by local governments across the province. It includes examples that are meant to pique your curiosity and inspire you to action, whether your community is just starting out or well on its way to creating a strong and healthy food system.



### Local Food System

A food system is local when it allows farmers, food producers and their customers to interact face-to-face at the point of purchase. Regional food systems generally serve larger geographical areas, and they can often work with farmers who have larger volumes of single products to sell.<sup>7</sup>

exported, and in the process are affected by laws and regulations beyond local control. Yet the sustainability of the local food system can be enhanced on a local level to address critical components of the system such as production, distribution and access.

In BC, local governments are uniquely positioned to take action. Governments at the municipal and regional levels are traditionally closer to their constituents' needs, and are able to be more responsive in addressing citizen's concerns. In every step of this process, there is a role for local governments to play; supporting, facilitating or leading the changes in their communities.

Improving food security involves integrating health, economic, ecological and social factors. Action to increase food security can be seen as a continuum that ranges from providing emergency food for those in need, to building capacity and access within the community, to redesigning the local food system for sustainability.<sup>8</sup>

Here is a taste of some of the many tangible and intangible benefits that can be realized when a local government takes action.

- **Improve the health of the population:** Ensuring access to fresh, nutritious food is critical for maintaining a healthy population. Enabling and promoting access to healthy food can help combat rising rates of obesity and chronic illnesses that can be partially addressed by improvements to diet and exercise. Community Gardens, Sharing Farms and other examples in this guide increase healthy eating and physical activity, and contribute to the provincial goal of making BC the healthiest province in Canada by 2010.
- **Improve the local economy:** Support for local food production, and ways to connect local consumers to local suppliers, helps build a stronger and more sustainable local economy. Food dollars remain in the community to circulate from buyers to sellers and back again.
- **Improve the environment:** Closer-to-home production reduces “food miles” — the distance that food travels to reach the table — and its corresponding environmental and social impacts. It can also reduce packaging, increase composting and reduce waste going to local landfills.
- **Improve the well-being of the community:** Supporting opportunities for community members to connect around food — such as farmers' markets, community gardens or advocacy to improve access to healthy foods — creates greater awareness

## Food Security

Community food security is achieved “when all citizens obtain a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self-reliance and equal access for everyone.”<sup>9</sup>

## Food insecurity

The opposite of food security, food insecurity refers to limited or uncertain access to nutritious, safe foods necessary to lead a healthy lifestyle; households that experience food insecurity have reduced quality or variety of meals and may have irregular food intake. (See Glossary for more.)

## About the Community Food Action Initiative

CFAI is a health promotion initiative of the provincial government aimed at increasing food security for all British Columbians. CFAI is a collaborative effort of BC's six health authorities and the BC Ministry of Health. CFAI is funded by the BC Ministry of Health, coordinated by the Provincial Health Services Authority and implemented by the Regional Health Authorities. This guide has been developed by CFAI in partnership with the Union of BC Municipalities and BC Healthy Communities.

and understanding of food-related issues, while building stronger partnerships and social networks, strengthening the very fabric of society. Addressing the local food system through food security is also a way of linking to other issues that communities grapple with, such as poverty and homelessness.

This guide provides just some examples from across the province of the many different ways local governments in BC are taking action to strengthen their local food systems. Included here are projects to support community gardens and farmers' markets, strategies to provide access to food in community planning decisions and to support local food production and examples of work being done to create capacity to help those in need. Local governments also actively support access to healthy foods by ensuring healthy choices become the easy choices in concessions and vending machines public places. And as catalysts, local governments bring people together in partnership to envision and plan for a stronger food system, formalizing their collective commitments into food policies and food charters.

## **Community Gardens: Growing Together**

Community gardens are attractive outdoor green spaces that are growing in popularity. Rooted in history, the first community gardens in Canada (1890-1930) were known as the Railway Gardens. Designed and maintained by the CPR, these gardens were located in town stations across the country, and manifested local community spirit in the pioneering west.<sup>10</sup> Known as Victory Gardens during WW II, community gardens were encouraged by government to help bolster wartime food supplies.<sup>11</sup>

Today in BC there are at least 170 community gardens<sup>12</sup>, with more than 60 in the Lower Mainland alone.<sup>13</sup> Typically, they consist of parcels of land divided into smaller plots for local residents to grow their own produce. In some communities, such as Taylor and Invermere, these gardens include greenhouses as a solution for cooler climates.

Encouraging community gardens is important in creating a sustainable local food system. They provide space and accessibility for aspiring gardeners who may have little means or resources of their own to cultivate affordable, fresh, healthy and seasonal food. The gardeners are largely responsible for organizing, maintaining and managing their own plots. They also have the option of choosing what to grow and the satisfaction of being more self-reliant and physically active, while connecting with the land.

### ***How Communities Benefit***

Gardens foster healthier, more socially responsible communities. Local governments have seen community gardens revitalize underused areas, turning them from neglected, sometimes derelict places, into spaces where beauty and a sense of community thrive. The City of Montreal's first official community garden, established in 1975, was initiated by citizens wanting to cultivate a lot left vacant after a fire. Montreal now boasts 97 community gardens, approximately 8,200 plots and more than 10,000 gardeners, with the greatest demand in rental areas with small city lots.

Local governments support community gardens as a way to increase access to nutritious food for those in need, making them less dependent on emergency food systems, and helping them become more independent. For example, the goal of some community gardens is to grow food solely for donation.

Community gardens also encourage physical activity, helping governments combat the rising rates of obesity and chronic illness so often associated with poor diet and exercise. Gardening is the number one recreational pastime of 72 per cent of Canadians<sup>14</sup>, lending to the appeal of community gardens for all ages. As more than one-third of Canadian gardeners are aged 55 and older, community gardens help seniors stay active and independent — an important consideration given that BC’s seniors’ population is expected to double by 2031.<sup>15</sup>

Gardens can increase awareness and understanding of food-related issues and help local governments foster relationships with local community groups.

## ***How Local Governments can take Action***

- **Land-use:** Land for community gardens can come through donation or grants of unused public or private spaces. Local governments can identify suitable sites for community gardens and incorporate them into existing zoning bylaws, similar to the District of Saanich (see Community Profile).
- **Education and Promotion:** Local governments can promote community gardens on their websites, in newsletters and other public forums. The City of Ottawa runs a food security awareness and education campaign known as “Just Food,” in which the Community Garden Network of Ottawa is prominent. For local governments involved in the Communities in Bloom competition, community gardens can be profiled in their applications.

Community gardens have also been used as demonstration sites for sustainable and environmentally sound practices, such as water conservation, composting and drought-tolerant or pesticide-free gardening.

- **Partnerships:** Local governments can play a key role in supporting existing gardens, or encouraging community groups and non-profits to start-up and maintain garden programs. The City of Abbotsford’s first public community garden opened in May 2008. Community volunteers and the City of Abbotsford Parks, Recreation & Culture Department formed a partnership to implement community gardens in the city. Starting with thirty 10’ x 20’ plots, additional plots may be added as demand warrants.<sup>16</sup>



*Abbotsford community gardens*

## Community Profile: District of Saanich Official Community Plan Community Gardens

In response to the loss of significant gardening space on private land, the District of Saanich on Vancouver Island enacted a community garden policy. Saanich amended its zoning bylaw to allow community gardens as a permitted land use in all zones, except natural parks or environmental conservation areas — something few municipalities in BC have done. Saanich also included incentives in the form of bonuses to create additional community gardens for developers seeking to increase density — and potential profits — on part of a site.

The district took a further step in 2001, responding to a citizens group called the Land for Food Coalition, by purchasing an ALR property that was under development prospects. Saanich redesignated the farm from a Utility Zone to a new Rural Demonstration Farm Zone then leased the farm to the newly established Haliburton Community Organic Farm Society. This group is developing the farm as an educational site that will serve the entire community by providing a model of small-scale organic production.

*“It was a brilliant move. With Saanich’s administration and the use of sound planning, a collaboration with concerned citizens was formed who rallied to make it happen with the first demonstration farm zoning classification of its kind in Canada. This was a significant transaction for Saanich and the community as a whole, and continues to be a showcase of urban organic agriculture.”*

**Kevin Weir, Director, Haliburton Community Organic Farm Society**

“Haliburton Farm was acquired by Saanich Municipality through a land swap plus some additional cash paid over a period of three years. Mayor Frank Leonard was the architect of the transaction and it was a brilliant move,” said Kevin Weir, who sits on the farm’s Board of Directors. “With Saanich’s administration and the use of sound planning, a collaboration with concerned citizens was formed who rallied to make it happen with the first demonstration farm zoning classification of its kind in Canada. This was a significant transaction for Saanich and the community as a whole, and continues to be a showcase of urban organic agriculture.”

<http://www.saanich.ca/business/development/plan/ocp.html>



Haliburton farm tour

## Farmers' Markets: Fresh, Healthy and Local

Farmers' markets operate in every type of community across BC: from Vancouver to Golden to Fort St. John.<sup>17</sup> Markets vary in size and sophistication, from large, sheltered public markets, such as on Granville Island in Vancouver, to a few farmers with their trucks parked in a parking lot or farm field. Typically, vendors are local and grow, make, raise or catch their own goods, and their wares often reflect the cultural diversity of the community.



With more than 100 to choose from<sup>18</sup>, farmers' markets are gaining widespread appeal as dynamic community places where consumers can buy food directly from producers. They close the gap between the farm and the table, reducing "food miles" that affect both the quality of the products and the environment. Consumers get the freshest food available — with the romance and pleasure of eating seasonal and regional — and the satisfaction of being sustainable.

Markets typically run spring through fall and are usually open during certain hours and days of the week. A more recent trend has seen an increase in the number of year-round markets such as the new Prince George Farmers' Market now held in St. Michael's Anglican Church during the winter.

### ***How Communities Benefit***

Markets enrich a community — they are lively, vibrant places — with the atmosphere of a street festival — that offer a variety of benefits.

Local governments have found farmers' markets to be a boon for local economies, keeping money in their communities while supporting local producers. They attract people from immediate and neighbouring areas as well as tourists. These consumers also patronize nearby businesses. The Moss Street Market in the City of Victoria injects more than \$700,000 annually into the local economy.

Increased access to locally grown products reduces dependence on imported foods and the global environmental impacts of shipping food. As an added bonus, markets encourage people to socialize, exercise and enjoy fresh-air, while promoting healthy eating as well as sustainable local food systems.

Markets can contribute to a local government's emergency preparedness plan by increasing local capacity and self-sufficiency. In its resolution to support urban agriculture, including farmers' markets, the City of Victoria refers to storms in 1996 and 2006, when transportation from sources off-island was inhibited and there was a scarcity of certain foods. With only five to ten per cent of the food consumed being grown on the island, the city recognized it was vulnerable and pointed to a need for action.

Markets can serve as a catalyst for other sustainable food initiatives. Relatively easy to set up, markets require little, if any, local government investment. They often support themselves with vendor fees, and do not require bricks and mortar or permanent land use. Local government leadership in this area can help generate community buy-in for other, more challenging initiatives to increase food security in the community.

## How Local Governments can take Action

- **Land-use:** Local governments can designate particular sites as suitable for farmers' markets in their official community and neighbourhood plans. While typically seasonal, most markets can be held in existing public spaces such as a municipal parks, streets or parking lots. For communities wishing to develop year-round markets, permanent sites could be considered. Vancouver's Southeast False Creek Official Development Plan, for example, includes a farmers' market to support local food systems.
- **Promotion and Support:** Local governments promote farmers' markets by posting times, dates and locations on their web sites, or by investing in comprehensive awareness and education campaigns. The City of Richmond's Agricultural Viability Strategy, adopted in 2003, is attempting to boost support for regional farms with recommendations for a "Buy Local" campaign and promotion of the local farmers' market. While Richmond is generally thought of as one of BC's larger urban communities, more than 40 per cent of Richmond's land mass is used for agriculture, an important part of the local economy. Local government can also contribute resources for traffic control, set-up, tear-down and clean-up.
- **Partnerships:** Local governments can increase support for new or existing farmers' markets by building stronger relationships with community groups or non-profits, encouraging their involvement in and support for farmers' markets. In developing the Agricultural Area Plan for the Comox Valley, the regional district gathered a diverse range of stakeholders to work on improvements to the local food system. The creation of the plan was guided by the regional district and adopted as a bylaw in 2003. This plan commits organizations to be responsible for certain components, such as the Farmers Market and Direct Farm Sales Association to increase local food marketing.

## Community Profile: Clearwater Farmers' Market, a Gateway to other Projects

The Clearwater Farmer's Market, 135 kms north of Kamloops,<sup>19</sup> has come a long way since its inception in 1998 when it was set up beside a mini-mart and had but two vendors. Today, it features 15 regular vendors and draws consumers from miles around each Saturday, May through October. "This market is successful because over the last seven years the community has supported us and allowed it to grow," said market representative Suzanne Gravelle.

The Thompson-Nicola Regional District (TNRD) offers promotional support to the market by lending its in-house production services to design and print rack cards, which regional district representatives include in trade show packages. Market pamphlets are promoted to tourists at the local chamber of commerce office.

The Clearwater Market is a good example of how one project can lead to others, as it has helped spearhead



Clearwater farmer's market

some innovative food resource initiatives. The market was instrumental in setting up a seed exchange program, partnering with the TNRD to provide information on composting and waste management.

The market has also been working with the North Thompson Valley Food Coalition to educate the public on local resources and to improve access to local sustainable foods. The North Thompson Valley Food Coalition grew out of a Food Forum in 2006 that gathered growers, cattlemen, local storeowners and citizens from the region, as well as members of the regional district, provincial government and Interior Health.

“Everyone has the right to healthy, affordable food that is easy to buy and preferably locally grown,” said North Thompson Valley Food Coalition coordinator Cheryl Thomas. “There were many people who were trying to do their part. Now, it is a much more collaborative effort. People are working together from Blue River to Barriere. They don’t feel so alone.”

While still in its infancy, the coalition has made remarkable strides. It has put a successful gleaning program into place, which uses volunteers to harvest or collect surplus fruit and vegetables from backyard gardens and trees and distribute it to others in the various communities — particularly families and individuals in need.

“In these more rural areas it’s not just a matter of not wanting all this fresh local food to go to waste, it’s also a matter of safety,” said Thomas. “All these unpicked fruits and vegetables bring out the bears.”

The gleaning program also taps into First Nations communities, which have shared their skills in locating and collecting wild indigenous fruits, vegetables and berries— something many people are unfamiliar with. There is a keenness to do this work with youth groups, so they grow up with the skills and take them into adulthood.

One of the more innovative initiatives was the planting of native fruit trees on publicly owned lands. “The idea behind that was to have publicly-accessible, seasonal, fresh food available for people to pick on their own. It’s a much more useful way to green up a space than planting flowers or cedar trees,” said Thomas. “People can go for a walk and pick a plum if they want to.”

The coalition is also starting work on a regional agriculture/food plan that will support local producers by establishing and expanding regular farmers’ markets and building local processing facilities. The plan is awaiting endorsement by the TNRD Board of Directors.

***“Everyone has the right to healthy, affordable food that is easy to buy and preferably locally grown. There were many people who were trying to do their part. Now, it is a much more collaborative effort. People are working together from Blue River to Barriere. They don’t feel so alone.”***

**Cheryl Thomas, North Thompson Valley Food Coalition Coordinator**

## Neighbourhood Planning: Making Food Access Easy

Local governments play an important role in planning their citizen's easy access to food. As communities grow up and out, some neighbourhoods are at risk of becoming “food deserts” — areas devoid of grocery stores or land on which to cultivate food. Thus, the population lacks ready access to a fresh and healthy diet.

An emerging component of “smart growth”<sup>20</sup> planning by local governments is to include sites and supports for neighborhood food resources, be they grocery stores, community gardens or farmers’ markets. One way to do this is through neighbourhood plans. When the City of Nanaimo was developing its new official community plan, it was acknowledged by council that more detailed neighbourhood plans were needed to address issues unique to each neighborhood.<sup>21</sup>



### ***How Communities Benefit***

Populations with fresh food sources within walking or biking distance are less dependent on public or private transportation to obtain food. Research shows that individuals also maintain a healthier weight.<sup>22</sup> When local governments include grocery stores in any redevelopment of inner city or lower-income areas, they increase access for low-income individuals, families and seniors, or those who lack access to reliable transportation.

Reducing travel time lessens greenhouse gas emissions, plus it encourages mobility and social interaction between neighbours, further supporting a healthy lifestyle in the community. This type of planning also creates both senior-friendly and accessible communities, an important consideration given BC’s aging population.

### ***How Local Governments can take Action***

■ **Planning and Land-Use:** Zoning bylaws provide front-line tools for local governments to promote aspects of food security by determining how communities will be developed. They can be used in conjunction with official community plans to establish food production, processing and retail areas. The Community Profile at the end of this section discusses how the City of Vancouver used official development plans for this purpose.

Mapping can also help local governments assess the need to set aside land or building locations for grocery stores, community gardens and farmers’ markets where they are lacking. It can also be used to ensure that transit routes provide easy accessibility, particularly for seniors and those in lower socio-economic areas.

- **Partnerships:** Local governments can work with developers, encouraging them to include food-access provisions such as container or rooftop gardening in their residential construction plans. The City of West Vancouver's Rodgers Creek Area plans call for all new-unit construction to include generous balconies for individual container food growing.

## ***Community Profile: City of Vancouver's False Creek North and Southeast False Creek Official Development Plans***

False Creek North lies on the northern shore of False Creek, just south of downtown Vancouver. The community's population is projected to increase from 9,500 (2006 census) to 14,000 once the area's new residential units are built under the existing Official Development Plan (ODP). This ODP is distinct because City of Vancouver planners recognized the need for residents to have access to food shopping within walking distance of their homes. The ODP identified the inclusion of a 2300-square-metre grocery store as a planned retail use for the area. This was an innovative move, as official development or community plans generally allow market forces to determine how retail space will be used, with mixed results.

[www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/BYLAWS/odp/FCN.PDF](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/BYLAWS/odp/FCN.PDF)

Southeast False Creek's ODP has also included some supportive measures that promote food accessibility, including a demonstration garden in the park near the community centre and a site for a farmers' market, though the exact location and size has not yet been determined. Additionally, building design aims to support urban agriculture through green roofs that enable on-site composting and rainwater collection. These green roofs are to be designed to provide for soil depths and load-bearing capacity sufficient to support the addition of gardens and landscaping. The plan also identifies opportunities for including edible landscaping, incorporating easy and artful access to healthy food.

[www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/bylaws/odp/SEFC.pdf](http://www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/bylaws/odp/SEFC.pdf)



## Support for Local Food Production: Home-Grown Goodness

A steady supply of fresh, healthy food, necessary for a strong local food system, depends on a healthy, thriving community of local food producers.

A large amount of food is imported into most BC communities. Today, it is estimated that the average food import in Canada travels 4,500 kilometres before being consumed.<sup>23</sup> But the increasing cost of oil, the loss of agricultural land due to development and erosion, and the impact of climate change all threaten long-term access to imported food.

By supporting local food producers with a strong regional distribution system for their products, a promotional campaign to educate local consumers, and a stable agricultural land base, local governments can reduce their reliance on imports and ensure their citizens have access to a sustainable supply of the freshest and most nutritional foods.

### *How Communities Benefit*

Agricultural spaces are desirable places — they beautify communities with fields of colour and open-air landscapes. But supporting local food production also requires attention to distribution. Grocery stores and restaurants are well linked to large food distributors through convenient purchasing and delivery arrangements. Small-scale, local farms often do not produce the variety and quantity of food that is available through distributors. Linking the products from local farms together through a co-operative, for example, could reduce costs while increasing the variety of food available through one common seller.

By facilitating a stable system for distribution, supply and demand for their farmers, local governments are rewarded with a stronger economy, as more money remains at home. In BC, local agriculture generates more than \$22 billion in sales from only three percent of our province's land base.<sup>24</sup>

### *How Local Governments can take Action*

■ **Education and Promotion:** Governments can support the local food system by raising awareness about the supply and demand of local food and urban agriculture, building stronger social and economic networks along the way. Increasing awareness about the variety of options available for the local consumer is a key step. Many local governments have created food directories that provide residents with handy and helpful information on where and when to buy local. The City of Prince George's Food in the City Task Force produced a guide to help consumers connect with local food suppliers, based on the feedback received at public forums held to discuss food issues. Further steps include the use of the Internet, email distribution lists and newsletters that provide up-to-date information to consumers.

Similar to Prince George, the City of Richmond invested in a full-scale public education campaign to link producers with local buyers and to increase support for local food production — including developing a logo to brand locally produced products.

For smaller communities with fewer resources, creativity, partnership and some seed funding is all that's needed. The Village of Hazelton council had limited resources, but provided strategic direction, sought funding and helped foster a wide range of initiatives to enhance local food security. The village received funding from the Community Health Promotion Fund to gather partners who created an entire food strategy. Of their many creative activities, one awareness-building event included a village-hosted 'Iron Chef Local Food Challenge,' which took place during the annual Pioneer Days. The event was a fun and interactive way to both raise the profile of food security and build support for local food production.



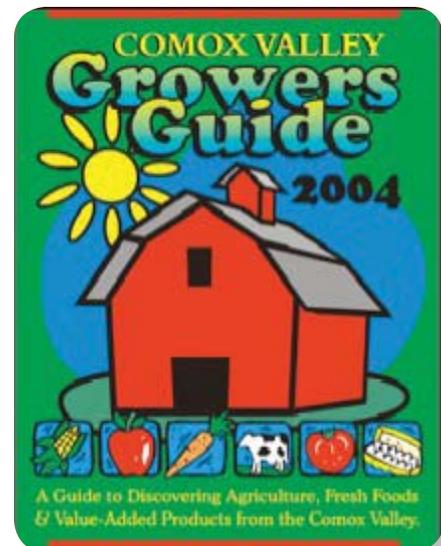
*Councillor Doug Donaldson and Julie Maitland (Mayor Alice Maitland's Daughter) at the Iron Chef Local Food Challenge*

Supporting local food systems is also about helping to manage relationships between urban residents and rural growers. In response to complaints from urbanites moving into rural areas about noise and slow-moving vehicles in the Comox Valley area, the regional district created a series of educational booklets. The goal was to inform people and to encourage their support of local agriculture. The booklets were widely distributed through real-estate offices, the visitor information centre, the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce and the valley's economic development offices. While the first guide focused specifically on urbanites moving to the valley, the latter two addressed potential new farmers and discussed the benefits of agricultural operations such as farmers' markets and local food processing facilities.

Local governments have also promoted agritourism for years and incorporated tours of local food production areas, such as popular orchard tours, into their tourism brochures.

- **Partnerships:** Local governments often have the resources to bring together local producers and encourage them to work as one to improve distribution to local buyers and increase their own profitability. For example, the City of Kamloops is home to an innovative organization called the Heartland Food Co-op (see Community Profile).

Local governments can also work in partnership with the producers themselves, by "walking the talk"; putting purchasing policies in place to ensure their food purchases are local whenever possible, within prescribed trade agreement procurement policies.



## Community Profile: Kamloops Heartland Food Co-op

The City of Kamloops played a critical role in the formation of the Heartland Food Co-op by organizing key contacts at regional committees and establishing partnerships for funding through Community Futures. This innovative project brought local producers together to explore ways of increasing access to locally produced foods and building strong networks to connect local buyers and sellers. The Heartland Co-op now offers a broad range of locally produced foods available at a single location through pre-ordered retail sales. The feasibility study to create the Heartland Food Cooperative was financed by Interior Health and the Community Futures Development Corporation of Thompson Country.

*“The City of Kamloops was instrumental in creating a partnership to develop a local food economy by facilitating the process. The city strongly believes in the importance of developing a local food economy as is shown in its support for the farmers’ market and the local producers’ co-op.”*

**Laura Kalina, Founding Member,  
Kamloops Food Policy Council**

“The City of Kamloops was instrumental in creating a partnership to develop a local food economy by facilitating the process,” said Laura Kalina, a founding member of the Kamloops Food Policy Council. “The city strongly believes in the importance of developing a local food economy as is shown in its support for the farmers’ market and the local producers’ co-op.”

Founded in 2007, the Heartland Foods and Farm Tours Cooperative has already amassed fifty producers and continues to grow. It is currently planning a processing facility to preserve seasonal products throughout the year.

[www.heartlandfoods.ca](http://www.heartlandfoods.ca)



Heartland Food Co-op. From left to right: Betty Peters (owner of Dominion Creek Ranch), Andrea Gunner (General Manager) Marla Ronnquist (Retail Sales Manager) and Suzen Allen (Book-keeper).

## Healthy Food in Public Buildings: Providing Healthy Choices

Some startling facts:

- In 2004, nearly one-quarter of Canadian adults were obese and an additional one-third were overweight.<sup>25</sup>
- The numbers are just as alarming for youth, as 26 per cent of Canadian children and teens aged 2 to 17 were overweight or obese.<sup>26</sup>
- For many people, one-quarter of each day's calories come from foods like cookies, chocolate, candy and chips.<sup>27</sup>



To combat these trends, the Government of British Columbia introduced a school food nutrition policy in 2005. The following year, it extended the initiative to replace junk food with healthier food and beverage choices in vending machines in BC public buildings, including hospitals. Through the BC Healthy Living Alliance, the UBCM and BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) are partnering to ensure local governments and recreation facilities get the support they need to make changes to their food and beverage selections. With 12 million programs being run through 800 recreational facilities every year, and thousands of families visiting BC municipal buildings, these facilities are being encouraged to use the public buildings nutrition criteria which can be found at [www.brandnamefoodlist.ca](http://www.brandnamefoodlist.ca).

Local governments are already active in encouraging healthy lifestyles. The sale of healthy food and beverage alternatives is an important strategy in promoting active living and reducing illness and chronic diseases that can result from an unhealthy diet. Promoting better choices in vending machines and concessions is a natural move for this sector.

### ***How Communities Benefit***

Local governments contribute toward the cost of infrastructure and equipment for health care in their communities, and the price of inaction is steep. Direct health-care costs associated with obesity alone are \$380 million per year in BC. Since unhealthy diets are a major contributing factor to the problem, replacing junk food with more nutritional options is one way for local governments to promote healthy eating that requires little or no investment.

For example, in 2008 the City of Kelowna endorsed a five-year plan to introduce healthier foods into its public facilities. The budget for the switch in year one was pegged at \$58,000, mainly to cover changes to concession stands. The city recently received a one-time grant of \$12,500 from the Healthy Food and Beverage Sales in Recreation Facilities and Local Government Buildings Initiative, co-lead by UBCM and

BCRPA. As well, the Healthy Food and Beverage Sales Initiative is partnering with Kelowna to implement its patron-awareness strategy and make this available to other communities across the province.

## **How Local Governments can take Action**

■ **Education:** The Municipal Recreation Food Environment Action Toolkit (MRFEAT) has been made available by the Healthy Food and Beverage Sales in Recreation Facilities and Local Government Buildings Initiative for use by local governments, individual facilities and community organizations to support HFBS planning, implementation and policy development. For more information on the toolkit, visit the BCRPA website at [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/HealthyFoodandBeverageSales.htm](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/HealthyFoodandBeverageSales.htm).

■ **Plans and Policies:** Local governments are introducing plans or policies to limit or eliminate junk food selections and provide healthier food options both in-house, or by contractors and vendors at public venues and facilities. The Food and Nutrition Policy adopted by Canoe Creek First Nation dictates that all food or beverages, coordinated or supported by the Band Council, must meet Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide at all sponsored events, within vending machines, concessions/canteens, coffee-room refrigerators and snack boxes.

In the absence of a plan or policies, local governments can visibly demonstrate their support by serving healthy foods and beverages at public meetings and functions — focusing on local, fresh ingredients whenever possible.

■ **Partnerships:** Local governments can engage community groups and/or business organizations to come up with ideas on how to increase access to healthy foods in public facilities (see Community Profile).

## **Community Profile: City of Kelowna Healthy Food and Beverage Sales Implementation Plan**

After the City of Kelowna signed a multi-year agreement in 2003 with a soft drink company, the practice of serving sugared pop and other beverages was questioned. The discussion expanded to all food products and the need to work with food concession operators. Dialogue began between the City of Kelowna, Regional District of Central Okanagan and Interior Health, resulting in the formation of the Healthy Food and Beverage Choices Task Force.

With funding from the city and Interior Health, a task force coordinator was hired and two healthy food workshops were held for organizations and businesses contracted to provide food for concession stands and vending machines. Close to 40 people attended one or both workshops to discuss offering healthier food options, and what changes and supports were necessary.

In April 2008, the city adopted the five-year Healthy Food and Beverage Sales Implementation Plan to build awareness, switch to packaged and prepared food products that reflect the Healthy Choice Checkmark

*“City parks, recreational facilities and sports programs are part of our commitment to keep our community active and healthy. It makes sense to also offer healthy food and beverage choices, especially in facilities used by children and families.”*

Reid Oddleifson,  
Development Manager,  
Recreation, Parks and  
Cultural Services, City of  
Kelowna

System, expand the number of vending machines providing healthy packaged food products, and develop new policies for food contracts for city-leased facilities. The outcomes will go a long way to making healthy choices easier.

Reid Oddleifson, Kelowna's development manager of recreation, parks and cultural services said support for the healthier food initiative is strong from critical stakeholders, but consultation is crucial. "In most cases, the people who run these concession stands are not-for-profit agencies, and there's always a fear that they won't support it. But that's not true. Our research indicates the operators very much supported this and that it is actually good for business. Volumes go up and profits go up."

When asked why local governments should get involved in promoting healthier eating, Oddleifson said: "City parks, recreational facilities and sports programs are part of our commitment to keep our community active and healthy. It makes sense to also offer healthy food and beverage choices, especially in facilities used by children and families."

[www.kelowna.ca](http://www.kelowna.ca)



## Creating Community Capacity: Food Now, and for the Future

Food security is a growing concern. Ensuring a healthy, sustainable supply of food for the entire population is a challenge, but especially for those in need. Local governments can play a key role in enhancing food security within their own communities.

British Columbia's poverty rate, at 14.2 per cent, is the highest in Canada.<sup>28</sup> According to the Canadian Community Health Survey (2004), 10.4 per cent of households in BC stated they were moderately or severely food insecure as a result of financial challenges. Moderately food insecure means that the quality of the food was compromised, while severely food insecure households also faced reduced quantity of food.<sup>29</sup> The most recent Hunger Count found that 76,514 people in BC used food banks in March 2007,<sup>30</sup> including 27,775 children. Yet every year in BC, an estimated 16 million tons of food goes to waste on farmers' fields.<sup>31</sup>



Action plans for building food security in the community need to include specific components to address the challenges of food insecurity, food availability and distribution and economic inequality.

### ***How Communities Benefit***

Proactive programs and policies, designed and delivered at the local level, can give those in need a leg-up rather than just a handout. Local governments have long been involved in supporting greater food security. Programs such as the Nanaimo Community Kitchen help train those who lack basic food preparation skills to prepare low-cost healthy meals. Workshops teaching participants how to can fruits and vegetables are also provided; further improving food security and sustainability.

Other local government-supported initiatives encourage homeowners with gardens or fruit trees to donate a portion of their produce to those in need. Many homeowners grow too much produce for themselves, or have no time, or are unable to harvest it. Volunteers can pick the produce, ensuring it goes to a worthy cause instead of the landfill. Better known as "gleaning," this is a centuries-old activity of gathering what is left behind after the harvest. Last year, for example, the Surrey Food Bank's volunteers gleaned 32,000 lbs. of fresh produce.<sup>32</sup>

Some garden projects encourage people to cultivate underused land and actively grow more than they require for their own use to give away to those in need. Other initiatives have an even broader scope, collecting unused food from local restaurants, grocery stores, farms and individuals, and redistributing it to people in need.

Programs such as these help build stronger communities by bringing together people of all ages, ethnicity and social backgrounds to work toward a common goal.

## **How Local Governments can take Action**

■ **Resources:** Local governments can provide land, water and/or maintenance for a community-run farm, such as the City of Richmond's volunteer-run Fruit Tree Sharing Project. Originally started in 2001, this initiative gleans unused food from the fruit trees of local homeowners. In 2005, the project expanded when the city helped secure a one-and-a-half acre permanent home called the Sharing Farm, and helped provide compost and materials for the new site. In 2007, the Fruit Tree Sharing Project donated 15,000 pounds of food to the food bank<sup>33</sup>. Its aim is to redistribute more than 250,000 pounds of food by 2012.



Following a public forum geared to building more supports for families with young children, the Town of Princeton partnered with a number of groups such as Communities for Kids and Success by Six to contribute to a drop-in community kitchen initiative called Family Place. The town assisted by renovating an old building and offering one year's free rent and utilities. A council member attends Community for Kids meetings, thus strengthening the partnership that has formed and sustaining the Family Place project.

■ **Education and Promotion:** Local governments can raise awareness about poverty and health issues related to food in their communities and educate residents on how they can make a difference by donating or volunteering.

The City of North Vancouver's Edible Garden Project includes the Strong Roots initiative, which provides information and education to the community, where knowledge and skills are built around ecological food gardening, healthy eating and food preservation.

■ **Partnerships:** Local governments can help launch new projects by holding key meetings and enabling discussions among stakeholders. The Edible Garden Project in the City of North Vancouver, for example, was the result of extensive community consultation to create a network between homeowners with gardens who want to donate a portion of their harvest, people who have under- or unused garden space and would like to cultivate this land for growing food, and volunteers who want to contribute to locally produced food. In 2007, the project collected 2300 pounds of fresh food from individual gardeners to be redistributed to those in need.<sup>34</sup>

## ***Community Profile: The Good Food Box Program in the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District***

Local governments have access to funding for food security initiatives, such as the provincially funded Community Health Promotion Fund (CHPF) administered by the UBCM. The Bulkley-Nechako Regional District received a pilot project grant from CHPF in 2007 to help address the challenges of ensuring isolated communities' access to healthy food choices. A Good Food Box Program was developed that provided an average of 95 families with boxes of healthy food each month. The program helped families, low-income community members, seniors, people with diabetes and four of the six neighbouring First Nations to make good food choices and reach the goal of at least five vegetables and fruits per day. Based on the project's success, it will continue to be administered by a local advisory committee with regional district representation, and a local sports organization taking on the program coordination as a fundraising activity.<sup>35</sup>

[www.rdbn.bc.ca](http://www.rdbn.bc.ca)



*The Bulkley-Nechako Regional District's Good Food Box program was off to a good start, with twice the expected number of orders placed in the first month. Recipient Sandy Haskett (l) is pictured here with coordinator Cindy Phair as they show off their fresh and healthy garden delights. Photo courtesy of Lakes District News.*

## Assessments, Charters and Policies: Pulling it All Together

Building a healthy community with a sustainable food system requires both planning and action. Planning, including understanding the current situation by conducting a Food System Assessment, helps integrate food into ongoing local government decisions, creating a systems approach to food security. Action takes this information and leverages it into food policies and food charters to provide strategic direction for the community.

Food charters help communities define what their food system should look like. They are declarations of communities' intent, and express key values and priorities for creating just and sustainable food supplies. Food policies typically focus on meeting charter goals with land-use planning, urban agriculture, emergency food distribution, food retail access, community health, waste management and economic development.

In 2005, the City of Vancouver, in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health, conducted the Vancouver Food System Assessment. The assessment provides an overview of Vancouver's food system, its relative food security, opportunities for enhancing the food-related economy in Vancouver and recommendations for increasing the sustainability of the food system.

### ***How Communities Benefit***

A community food assessment is the first step toward developing local, healthy, community-based solutions. It's a way to bring the whole community together around a single issue that matters to everyone, regardless of age, gender, economics, ethnicity or social background — food.

Food assessments give local governments the background information they need, providing a comprehensive picture of the current state of their food systems. Assessments help identify partners, community resources and opportunities for increasing food security. An assessment can be a springboard for involvement in other measures to build community food security. By getting the community involved and aware of its food choices, an assessment can motivate people to make change — to partner with farmers, to start a community kitchen, community garden or farmers' market. Finally, the data collected during an assessment will be vital in monitoring the effectiveness of food policies and food charters on the evolving food system.

Food charters and policies formalize the commitment around food, turning the vision into action. By integrating food into decision-making, local governments create broad cultural, social, economic, environmental, health and educational benefits. The City of Vancouver cites the additional benefits of applying



food-system best practices to its operations as ways to improve energy efficiency, reduce pollution, conserve water and reduce waste.

Local governments have found that charters can promote safe food, good nutrition and health, and revitalize local communities by building self-reliance and collaboration. They can foster community economic development and act as a catalyst for other food-related initiatives. The Ottawa Food Security Council (now called Just Food) grew out of community concern about food security. Provided with funding by the City of Ottawa in 2003, a variety of projects operate out of Just Food today, accessing funding from organizations as diverse as the Social Planning Council and the National Capital Commission.

The City of Toronto has a 15-year partnership with the Board of Health. City officials believe their Food Policy Charter has been instrumental in building a sustainable food system.

## ***How Local Governments can take Action***

**Food Assessment:** Local governments can implement their own action plans starting with food assessments in their communities. The Community Food Action Initiative, a health promotion initiative aimed at increasing food security for all British Columbians, has a handy step-by-step resource guide for conducting assessments on their web site at [www.phsa.ca](http://www.phsa.ca).

The City of Vancouver played a key role in securing funding and partnerships for its Food System Assessment and also provided staff support and technical assistance. Local governments can also form partnerships with other community groups working on food issues rather than take on the task themselves, and leverage their support by obtaining funding through various sources such as the Community Health Promotion Fund.

- **Food Charters and Policies:** Local governments can put food charters and policies in place that reflect their community's unique needs. Three local governments in BC — small, medium and large — have already done so with their charters. See the Community Profile at the end of this section on the this section on the Village of Kaslo, the City of Vancouver and the City of Kamloops.

Local governments can adopt policies that make provisions for land use such as community gardens or farmers' markets, or provide funding and support for emergency food systems such as food banks. Or, like the City of Victoria, they can make declarations that recognize the connection of these community supports to regional food security. Policies can also apply to in-house purchasing such as the one set by the Canoe Creek First Nation.



- **Public Education and Awareness:** Local governments can raise awareness about food assessments, charters and policies in their newsletters, information brochures and on their websites. They can recognize efforts of groups and stakeholders and promote their campaigns, workshops and conferences. For example, one of the mandates of the Kamloops Food Policy Council, of which the City of Kamloops is a member, is to create opportunities for people to meet and act on community food issues.
- **Partnerships:** Local governments can provide a representative to sit on local community committees or work with local groups. They may also establish advisory committees, steering committees, committees of councils or the board (ad hoc or permanent), or incorporate food-action planning into existing committees. Some communities have set up food policy councils to work solely on integrating food into local government operations.

## ***Community Profiles: Food Charters in Kaslo, Vancouver and Kamloops***

In February 2008, the Village of Kaslo adopted its Food Charter, the third in BC. Three key reasons were cited for developing the Charter: one in five people in Kaslo live in poverty, there is a high dependence on food transported into the community, and there are great benefits in building a local food system. The Food Charter outlines fifteen priority areas to promote food security for land-use planning. It outlines values and commitments that the Kaslo Village Council can make to further food security and strengthen local food systems, with the goal of ensuring that every resident has access to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and culturally appropriate food.<sup>36</sup> The Charter includes supporting programs and services for children, creating partnerships and making it easier to access healthy food choices.

[www.nklcss.org/foodcharter.php](http://www.nklcss.org/foodcharter.php)

In early 2007, Vancouver's mayor and council adopted the Vancouver Food Charter. This came after two years of work by the Vancouver Food Policy Council toward meeting goals identified in the City's Food Action Plan, the Food Charter being a step toward enacting the plan. The charter presents a vision for a food system that benefits the community and the environment, and states the city's commitment to coordinated municipal food policy. The charter promotes education, celebration and on-the-ground projects for a healthy economy, ecology and society through five key principles: community economic development, ecological health, social justice, collaboration/participation and celebration.

[www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/tools/pdf/Van\\_Food\\_Charter\\_Bgrnd.pdf](http://www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/tools/pdf/Van_Food_Charter_Bgrnd.pdf)

The Kamloops Food Charter framework was developed in the late 1990s, and through amendments to the Kamloops Social Plan, was established as city policy in 2002. This charter envisions a just and sustainable food system that encourages systems of production, processing, distribution, consumption and recycling that protect natural resources. It provided the context for developing the Kamloops Food Action Initiative and Food Action Plan.

[www.fooddemocracy.org/docs/FoodActionPlan\\_sept06.pdf](http://www.fooddemocracy.org/docs/FoodActionPlan_sept06.pdf)

## For More Information

Local governments are putting their many skills, resources and tools to work on building sustainable communities with strong local food systems. Using planning processes, such as bylaws and official community plans, local governments ensure ready access to grocery stores and help plan for future community gardens and farmers' markets. They support the economy by facilitating economic policies and partnerships to link local consumers with local producers. They improve access to nutritious foods in places they control, such as vending machines in public buildings, and encourage others to do the same. And local governments create and support programs and services that ensure our most vulnerable have good food to eat and opportunities to bolster their skills and become more self-reliant.

Resources local governments can access include:

### *Funding Sources*

- British Columbia Health Living Alliance funding programs: [www.bchealthyiving.ca](http://www.bchealthyiving.ca)
- Union of British Columbia Municipalities' (UBCM) Community Health Promotion Fund: [www.civicnet.bc.ca](http://www.civicnet.bc.ca)

### *Food Policy Groups, Networks and Programs*

- A Baseline for Food Policy in BC: [www.ffcf.bc.ca/baseline.html](http://www.ffcf.bc.ca/baseline.html)
- BC Food Systems Network Society: [www.fooddemocracy.org/index.html](http://www.fooddemocracy.org/index.html)
- Community Food Security Coalition: [www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)
- Food Secure Canada: [www.foodsecurecanada.org](http://www.foodsecurecanada.org)
- Food Share Learning Centre Library: [www.foodshare.ca/resource/index.cfm](http://www.foodshare.ca/resource/index.cfm)
- Growing Green: for sustainable food systems: [www.ffcf.bc.ca/GrowingGreen.html](http://www.ffcf.bc.ca/GrowingGreen.html)
- Indigenous Environmental Network Statement on the Right to Food and Food Security: [www.ipcb.org/issues/agriculture/htmls/2003/ien\\_food\\_sec.html](http://www.ipcb.org/issues/agriculture/htmls/2003/ien_food_sec.html)
- International Indian Treaty Council: [www.ipcb.org](http://www.ipcb.org)
- Ryerson University's Centre for Studies in Food Security: [www.ryerson.ca/foodsecurity](http://www.ryerson.ca/foodsecurity)
- The Food and Agriculture Organization's Special Program for Food Security: [www.fao.org/spfs](http://www.fao.org/spfs)
- Urban Agriculture: [www.sustainweb.org/urban\\_index.asp](http://www.sustainweb.org/urban_index.asp)

### *Additional Resources*

- Community Food Action Initiative at Northern Health, Interior Health, Vancouver Island Health, Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health Authorities.

- BC Healthy Communities: [www.bchealthycommunities.ca](http://www.bchealthycommunities.ca)
- BC Nutrition Guide: [www.health.gov.bc.ca/prevent/nutrition/index.html](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/prevent/nutrition/index.html)
- BC Association of Farmers Markets: [www.bcfarmersmarket.org](http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org)
- Smart Growth BC: [www.smartgrowth.bc.ca](http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca)
- Edible Gardens: [www.ediblegardenproject.com](http://www.ediblegardenproject.com)
- Thought about Food? A Workbook on Food Security & Policy: [www.foodthoughtful.ca/index.htm](http://www.foodthoughtful.ca/index.htm)

## ***Community Profile Resources***

### **1. District of Saanich**

- [www.saanich.ca/business/development/plan/ocp.html](http://www.saanich.ca/business/development/plan/ocp.html)
- Saanich's Community Gardens Policy: [www.gov.saanich.bc.ca/municipal/clerks/bylaws/gardens.pdf](http://www.gov.saanich.bc.ca/municipal/clerks/bylaws/gardens.pdf)
- Haliburton Community Organic Farm: [www.haliburtonfarm.org](http://www.haliburtonfarm.org)

### **2. Clearwater Farmer's Market and the Thompson-Nicola Regional District**

- Interview with Cheryl Thomas, North Thompson Valley Food Coalition and Suzanne Gravelle, Clearwater Farmer's Market representative.

### **3. False Creek North and Southeast False Creek**

- City of Vancouver North False Creek ODP:  
[www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/BYLAWS/odp/FCN.PDF](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/BYLAWS/odp/FCN.PDF)
- City of Vancouver Southeast False Creek ODP:  
[www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/bylaws/odp/SEFC.pdf](http://www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/bylaws/odp/SEFC.pdf)
- McCann, Barbara. Community Design for Healthy Eating; how land use and transportation solutions can help. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2006:  
[www.rwjf.org/pdf/CommunityDesignHealthyEating](http://www.rwjf.org/pdf/CommunityDesignHealthyEating)

### **4. Kamloops Heartland Food Co-op**

- [www.heartlandfoods.ca](http://www.heartlandfoods.ca)

### **5. City of Kelowna Healthy Food and Beverage Sales**

- Interview with Reed Oddleifson, Development Manager, City of Kelowna Recreation, Parks and Cultural Services [www.kelowna.ca](http://www.kelowna.ca)

## 6. Bulkley-Nechako Regional District Good Food Box

- [www.rdbn.bc.ca](http://www.rdbn.bc.ca)

## 7. Food Charters in Kaslo, Vancouver and Kamloops

- North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society, Kaslo Food Charter: [www.nklcss.org/foodcharter.php](http://www.nklcss.org/foodcharter.php)
- City of Vancouver, Backgrounder on the Food Charter: [http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/tools/pdf/Van\\_Food\\_Charter\\_Bgrnd.pdf](http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/tools/pdf/Van_Food_Charter_Bgrnd.pdf)
- Kamloops Food Charter: [http://www.fooddemocracy.org/docs/FoodActionPlan\\_sept06.pdf](http://www.fooddemocracy.org/docs/FoodActionPlan_sept06.pdf)

## *Reports and Manuals*

- Dahlberg, Kenneth, et. al.. Strategies, policy approaches, and resources for local food system planning and organizing. The Local Food System Project Team, 1997. <http://homepages.wmich.edu/~dahlberg/ResourceGuide.html>
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- Joseph, Hugh ed. Community Food Security: A Guide to Concept, Design and Implementation. Community Food Security Coalition, 1997.
- Kalina, Laura. Building Food Security in Canada: From Hunger to Sustainable Food Systems: A Community Guide, 2nd Edition. Kamloops Food Share, 2001.
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## Glossary

Unless otherwise indicated, this glossary is adapted from “CFAI-UBCM-BCHC Local Food Resource Guide for Local Governments in BC, February, 2008”.

**Food bank** is a broad term for an organization or entity that acquires, stores and distributes food to the needy in a community. Food banks are typically supported by community food drives and umbrella organizations, as well as grocery stores, local agriculture, food manufacturers and other distributors.

**Food charters** are public declarations of a community’s intent toward its food system. They express key values and priorities for creating just and sustainable food systems, and are a conscious reflection of the direction and importance of food security. Food charters generally combine vision statements, principles and broad action goals pointing toward a coordinated municipal food strategy.

**Food policy** is defined as any decisions, programs or projects that are endorsed by a government agency, business or organization affecting how food is produced, processed, distributed, purchased, protected or disposed.

**Food policy councils** provide a forum for advocacy and policy development that works toward an ecologically sustainable, economically viable and socially just food system. Their primary goal is to comprehensively examine the operations of local food systems and provide ideas and policy recommendations for improvement.

**Food security** is a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice. (Hamm and Bellows, 2003). Food security also includes being able to make a living by growing and producing food in ways that protect and support both the land, sea and the food producers, and that ensures that there will be healthy food for our children’s children. (Food Security Projects of the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre, Dalhousie University)

**Food insecurity** is the opposite of food security. Food insecurity refers to limited or uncertain access to nutritious, safe foods necessary to lead a healthy lifestyle; households that experience food insecurity have reduced quality or variety of meals and may have irregular food intake. (United States Department of Agriculture, Life Research Office)

**Food safety** refers to the concept of food being free from all hazards, whether chronic or acute that makes food injurious to the health of the consumer. (World Health Organization)



**Gleaning** is the practice of gathering crops that would otherwise be left in the fields to rot or be plowed under after harvest. Because the food is unmarketable, growers allow gleaners to pick what is left after harvest to donate to those who are in need.<sup>37</sup>

**Local food systems** allow farmers, food producers and their customers to interact face-to-face at the point of purchase. Regional food systems generally serve larger geographical areas and they often can work with farmers who have larger volume of single products to sell.<sup>38</sup>

**Official Community Plan (OCP)** is a statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land-use management within the area covered by the plan, respecting the purposes of local government. An OCP provides a long-term vision of the community and defines the policies, priorities and guidelines for land use.

**Smart growth** is a collection of land-use and development principles that aim to enhance our quality of life, preserve the natural environment, and save money over time. Smart growth principles ensure that growth is fiscally, environmentally and socially responsible, and recognizes the connections between development and quality of life. Smart growth places priority on infill, redevelopment, and green space protection.<sup>39</sup> (Smart Growth BC)

**Sustainable agriculture** is a method of farming that provides a secure living for farm families, maintains the natural environment and resources, supports the rural community, and offers respect and fair treatment to all involved — from farm workers to consumers to the animals raised for food.

**Sustainable food system** is a system that integrates ecological, social and economic considerations into the production, processing, distribution, selection and consumption of food. Sustainable food systems help build healthy, engaged communities and citizens.

## Sources

This resource guide has been written based on the research document: CFAI-UBCM-BCHC Local Food Resource Guide for Local Governments in BC, February, 2008, written by Jason Found and Melissa Garcia-Lamarca, Sustainability Solutions Group.

## Endnotes

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- 12 Jamie Kumar, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Kelowna, BC
- 13 City Farmer: [www.cityfarmer.org](http://www.cityfarmer.org)
- 14 Go For Green: The Active Living Environment Program: [www.goforgreen.ca](http://www.goforgreen.ca)
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- 37 Society of St. Andrew: [www.endhunger.org](http://www.endhunger.org)
- 38 Food Security Learning Centre: [www.worldhungeryear.org](http://www.worldhungeryear.org)
- 39 Smart Growth BC: [www.smartgrowth.bc.ca](http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca)