
TO: CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2016 June 21

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 2150 01
Reference: Metro Vancouver

SUBJECT: REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

PURPOSE: To seek Council endorsement of the Metro Vancouver Regional Food System Strategy (RFSS) Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council endorse the Metro Vancouver Regional Food System Strategy Action Plan.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to the Environment Committee for information.

REPORT**1.0 BACKGROUND**

At its meeting of 2016 February 1, Council received a report entitled 'Regional Food System Strategy Action Plan – Draft', which provided an overview of staff comment on all elements of a draft Action Plan prepared by Metro Vancouver. On 2016 April 29, the Metro Vancouver Board approved the Regional Food System Action Plan and conveyed the document to member local governments for endorsement.

The Action Plan is a companion document to the Regional Food System Strategy (RFSS), which was adopted by Metro Vancouver in 2011 February. At the time of adoption, Metro Vancouver staff were also directed to develop an RFSS Action Plan. Accordingly, during the course of 2015, Metro Vancouver staff formed and worked with a Task Force composed of local government staff to develop a draft Regional Food System Strategy Action Plan. Burnaby was represented on the Task Force by a staff member from the Planning and Building Department. Burnaby's input into the process was guided by adopted plans and policies.

Both documents are structured around five key goals for the region in relation to the Food System:

- increased capacity to produce food closer to home;
- improved financial viability of the food sector;
- increased opportunity for healthy and sustainable food choices;

- equal access to healthy, culturally diverse and affordable food; and
- a food system consistent with ecological health.

The RFSS and the RFSS Action Plan were adopted by the Metro Vancouver Board by resolution and are one of a number of regional strategies and plans that contribute towards the development of a sustainable region. There is no binding effect of the goals, strategies or actions set out in the RFSS and RFSS Action Plan on any of the partners. The ability to make progress on the Strategy and Action Plan depends upon the activities and progress that regional partners take in this area.

The City has a policy framework that supports many of the actions and approaches outlined for local governments in the RFSS and Action Plan. More specifically, the Social Sustainability Strategy (2011) contains two food security related actions (#25 and #26), both of which are included in the Phase 1 Implementation Plan. In addition, the draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy framework includes a section called 'Nourish – Food Systems', which contains a wide range of proposed strategies and 'quick start actions' related to food systems and their impact on the health of individuals, the community and the environment.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF ACTION PLAN

The RFSS Action Plan is focused specifically on the role of local government in achieving a sustainable food system, whereas the RFSS is a broader document which examines the roles of multiple stakeholders (e.g. Federal and Provincial Governments, Health Authorities, non-profit sector). A summary of actions relative to Burnaby is included as *Attachment 1*.

The Action Plan provides an inventory of ongoing and planned actions being undertaken by local governments in the region, including Burnaby. As well, a basic outline of new proposed actions are included along with new 'emerging' issues/initiatives that are proposed in response to gaps identified by the Task Force. These new emerging issues are:

- Food access and safety in emergency planning;
- Recognizing the linkages among poverty, health and food; and
- Food safety and training.

The Action Plan clearly identifies new actions and emerging issues by Agricultural or Non-Agricultural communities. This specific categorization was not included in the 2011 Regional Food System Strategy. In this context, Agricultural communities refers to those Metro Vancouver member municipalities that retain 95% of the region's agricultural land (Delta, Langley Township, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Richmond, and Surrey). Non-Agricultural communities are those that, while they may be stewarding smaller sections of the Agricultural Land Reserve, are on lands mostly within the Urban Containment Boundary, as defined by *Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping our Future (Metro 2040) Regional Growth Strategy*. In this context, Burnaby is identified as a Non-Agricultural community.

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This structure recognizes the particular roles that member municipalities play within the region in relation to agriculture and food and provides opportunity for complementary and collaborative action. Broadly speaking across the included actions, Agricultural municipalities are focused on protecting agricultural land and expanding commercial food production, whereas the Non-Agricultural municipalities are more engaged in the social and educational benefits of urban agriculture.

3.0 CONCLUSION

The draft Regional Food System Strategy Action Plan provides an inventory of ongoing and planned actions being undertaken by local governments in the region. As well, a basic 'outline' of new proposed actions are included including three issues emergent since 2011 when the Food System Strategy was adopted by the Metro Vancouver Board.

Overall, staff are in support of the actions contained within the Action Plan as the initiatives relevant to Burnaby have been identified in existing Burnaby policy documents, and can be implemented using available resources and within applicable jurisdictional limits for local government. For those actions which intersect with the responsibilities of higher levels of government, staff will participate in any emerging processes or discussions. For example, in the instance of the 'emerging' issue identified in *Section 2.0*, 'Food access in emergency planning', direction would be sought from Emergency Management BC (EMBC) to recommend appropriate related content for local emergency plans.

The draft Action Plan takes the approach that it is the collective actions of all local governments in the region that will advance the goals of having a sustainable food system. Burnaby has a policy framework, as outlined in *Section 1.0* of this report, which supports many of the actions outlined for local governments. Accordingly, it is recommended that Council endorse the Metro Vancouver Regional Food System Strategy Action Plan and that this report be forwarded to the Environment Committee for information.


Lou Pelletier, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

RM:sa/sla
Attachment

cc: Deputy City Manager
Director Engineering
Director Finance
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Emergency Program Coordinator

Metro Vancouver Regional Food System Action Plan Excerpted Burnaby Actions

1.1 PROTECT AGRICULTURAL LAND FOR FOOD PRODUCTION

- Reduce and prevent damage or erosion of the ALR by non-farm uses to support production and economic development in the agricultural sector (ongoing)

1.2 RESTORE FISH HABITAT AND PROTECT SUSTAINABLE SOURCES OF SEAFOOD

- Implement Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) guidelines and watercourse protection regulations to protect fish bearing streams (ongoing)

1.3 ENABLE EXPANSION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

- Support, through financial or other means, the Kwantlen Polytechnic University's Southwest BC Bio-Region Food System Design Project that will explore the economic, environmental stewardship and food self-reliance of a bio-regional food system (ongoing)
- Continue to improve water infrastructure/drainage upgrades including activities such as dyke and pump upgrades and maintaining ditch conveyance (ongoing)

1.5 EXPAND URBAN COMMERCIAL FOOD PRODUCTION IN URBAN AREAS

- Zoning and regulatory updates to further encourage agricultural production and allow urban farming (next five years)

2.2 INCLUDE LOCAL FOODS IN THE PURCHASING POLICIES OF LARGE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

- Review purchasing agreements and integrate local food options where appropriate (ongoing)

2.3 INCREASE DIRECT MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL FOODS

- Provide in-kind support or direct incentives for farmers' markets (e.g. space, infrastructure, advertising, discounted leases) (ongoing)
- Develop and promote local farm tours and agri-tourism opportunities (next 5 years)

2.5 REVIEW GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THEY ENABLE THE EXPANSION OF THE LOCAL FOOD SECTOR

- Explore developing a community based food strategy (next 5 years)
- Finalize and approve Environmental Sustainability Strategy which includes a food systems theme (next 5 years)

3.1 ENABLE RESIDENTS TO MAKE HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

- Develop partnerships with community groups and health authorities to deliver outreach and workshops on healthy eating and growing food (ongoing)

3.2 COMMUNICATE HOW FOOD CHOICES SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY

- Implement a communications strategy that explains the connection between sustainability and nourishment, as part of Environmental Sustainability Strategy (next 5 years)

3.3 *ENHANCE FOOD LITERACY AND SKILLS IN SCHOOLS*

- In-kind support to promote the Youth Connection School Learning Gardens Project to increase capacity of students to manage and expand school learning gardens at all 8 secondary schools (ongoing)

3.4 *CELEBRATE THE TASTE OF LOCAL FOODS AND THE DIVERSITY OF CUISINES*

- Multiple Festivals (including funding)

4.1 *IMPROVE ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD AMONG VULNERABLE GROUPS*

- Support hosting of the bi-annual Empty Bowls Fundraising Gala to raise money for food programs (ongoing)
- Support education, skill building and cooking activities for people most vulnerable to food insecurity (ongoing)
- Offer discounted nutritious meals for seniors, immigrant or refugee families (ongoing)
- Provide grants to social service agencies to help increase the nutritional quality of meals served (ongoing)
- Investigate options for increasing access to nutritious food through mobile produce stands or food hubs with the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society (next 5 years)
- Offer grocery shopping support programs for seniors and persons with disabilities (ongoing)

4.2 *ENCOURAGE URBAN AGRICULTURE*

- Encourage, via in-kind support, backyard sharing programs that match homeowners with residents looking for gardening space (ongoing)
- Review development applications for opportunities to incorporate urban agriculture activities (ongoing)

4.3 *ENABLE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS TO RECOVER NUTRITIOUS FOOD*

- Continue to support the “Food Runners” pilot project at two selected sites, and investigate opportunities for pilot project expansion (ongoing)

5.1 *PROTECT AND ENHANCE ECOSYSTEM GOODS AND SERVICES*

- Continue significant dyke upgrades by maintaining flood protection through pump stations, flood boxes, river and shoreline dykes (ongoing)
- New policies, plans and programs to protect eco-system health including investigating avenues for connecting existing high value habitat areas with habitat corridors (next 5 years)

5.3 *FACILITATE ADOPTION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES*

- Minimize environmental impacts from pesticides through Integrated Pest Management educational programs (ongoing)
- Provide workshops for residents on natural pest control and composting (ongoing)