JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART A - FEBRUARY 2023

HALIFAX

HALIFAX FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 5
Introduction 7
JustFOOD Action Plan Development 8
Plan Principles and Structure 11
Next Steps 12

FOUNDATIONS: BACKGROUND REPORT 15
Why JustFOOD? 18
Food and Municipalities 19
Our Food System 20
- Halifax Regional Municipality 20
- Food and Equity 21
- Food Production 23
- Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution 24
- Health, Wellness, and Resilience 25
- Emergency Food Planning 27
- Food and COVID-19 28
- Food Waste 29

Development of the JustFOOD Action Plan 30
- Halifax Food Policy Alliance 30
- Food Counts 31
- HRM Food Charter 31
- Milan Urban Food Policy Pact 32

Plan Structure and Action Areas 33

SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT 34
Engagement Overview 35
Engagement Priorities 35
Engagement Design 36
Building Awareness 36
Phase One Engagement 37
Phase Two Engagement 37
Engagement Themes 38

RECOMMENDATIONS 39
Governance 41
Social and Economic Equity 45
- Indigenous Food Justice and Sovereignty 57
- African Nova Scotian Food Justice and Sovereignty 61

Food Production 66
Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution 72
Health, Wellness, and Resilience 75
Food Waste 80

IMPLEMENTATION 83
Strategies for Success 84
Next Steps 85

References 87

Appendices 88
Appendix 1. Building Collaboration 89
Appendix 2. Engagement Design and Results Report 90
Appendix 3. JustFOOD Action Plan Framework 101

Cover photo: Kelly Clark Fotography

Acknowledgements

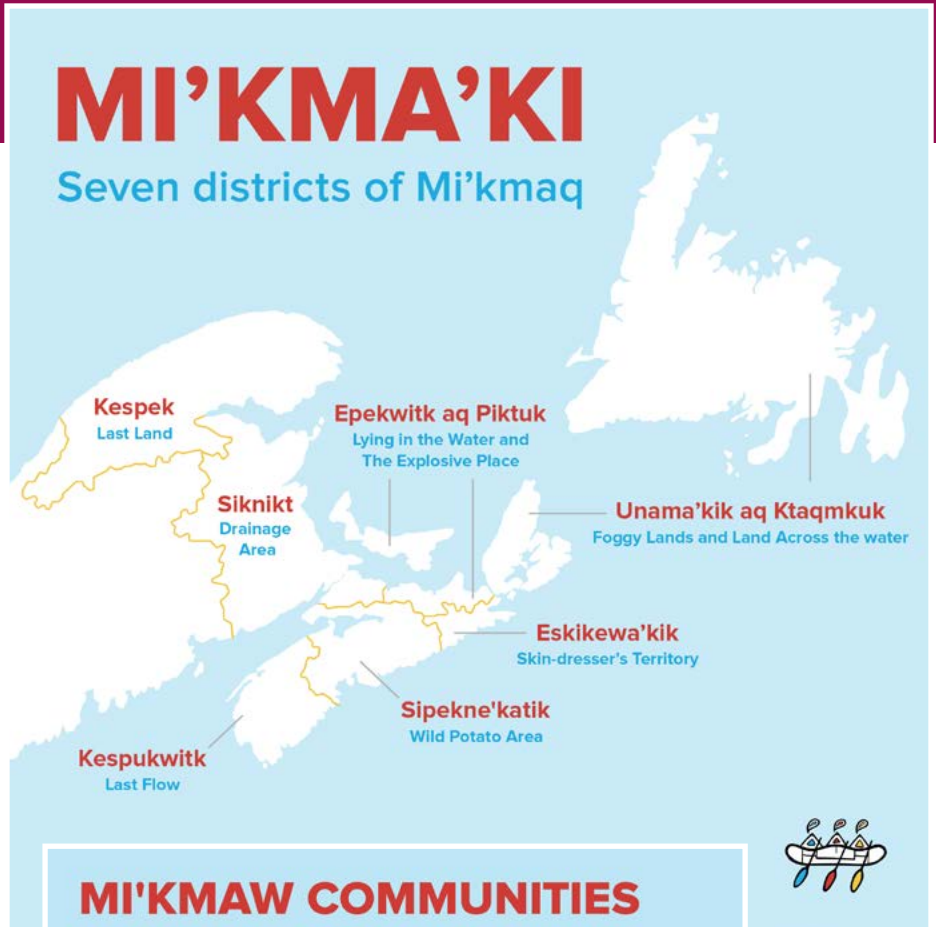
Land Acknowledgement

The meetings, work, and envisioned goals of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* take place on the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq First Nation.

We make this land acknowledgement to recognize Indigenous claims to unceded territory and Indigenous lineages of agriculture. We do so in order to express respect to the land and elders who were here before us. Indigenous Peoples were growing, harvesting, hunting, fishing, and collecting food in a healthy, sustainable, just way for generations before colonization. We specifically acknowledge the Mi'kmaq for their stewardship of the land and the importance of consciously working towards reconciliation in our work.

This acknowledgement challenges us to ask questions that bear directly on this project, such as: how to link to Mi'kmaw governance, what is the role of treaty, and what implications does this work have for the land and sea that local food comes from?

In mainstream settler culture, it is easy to forget how our region nourishes us. Important knowledge on the problems that we are trying to understand and the solutions that we are trying to develop exists in traditionally marginalized communities. As we consider how to increase access to food and strengthen the food system, we acknowledge the need to steward our region wisely by learning from Indigenous wisdom and values of ecological health, social justice, and food sovereignty.



Maps: 2023 North American Indigenous Games

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

The *JustFOOD Action Plan* was developed with input from municipal and provincial governments, 29 community organizations, and thousands of HRM residents who generously shared their wisdom and experiences. In particular, we are grateful for the contributions of the African Nova Scotian Advisory Group, Reclaiming Our Roots, the Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre, No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia, and the Disability Community Advisory Group.

Members of the Halifax Food Policy Alliance prepared the Plan, including:

- Leticia Smillie, Project Manager, Halifax Regional Municipality
- More Vail and Ben Lemphers, Ecology Action Centre
- Laura Bellussi and Heather Monahan, Nova Scotia Health
- Jamie Baxter, Anna Giddy, and Adrienne Klein, Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University
- Maxine Maclean, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture
- Plan document and website design by Dean Gallant, Pinwheel Communication Design

Executive Summary

JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART A - FEBRUARY 2023

HALIFAX

HALIFAX FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

Executive Summary

This document is the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region: Part A*.

Part B of the Plan will be developed following the public launch of Part A.

Part A sets the stage for our regional food system, captures public engagement findings, and lays out a set of recommendations for positive food system transformation. Part A is intended to function as a living document that will be monitored, evaluated, and refined over time as necessary.

Part B of the Plan will include formal commitments to action from food system partners as well as implementation strategies needed to make Plan recommendations a reality. A complete action Plan, comprising Part A and Part B, will be brought to Halifax Regional Council for approval in 2023.

The development of the JustFOOD Action Plan is co-led by the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance.

HALIFAX

HALIFAX FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

Introduction

A just and resilient local food system exists when all residents can access healthy and sustainably produced foods with dignity; when community health is assured; when food workers are supported; and when our agricultural and fishing communities thrive.

The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) has a complex, adaptive food system as well as a rich history of local production and self-reliance. However, nearly one in five HRM households cannot access the food they need. In fact, the average rate of household food insecurity across HRM is 18.6%[1] as compared to an average of 15.9% across Canadian provinces.[2] As the municipality continues to grow, there is a unique opportunity to strengthen our food system.

The creation, adoption, and implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region* is a significant investment in our future. It is designed to bring communities and key players together to improve food security, reduce food inequities, support inclusive economic growth, foster resilience in the face of climate change, and promote the health and well-being of all residents. The success of the Plan will depend on collective action and collaboration between governments, individuals, businesses, and agencies, each understanding their unique role and contribution. The Province's forthcoming *Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy* represents an opportunity for coordinating regional food system action. Food system solutions must build on the expertise of food system innovators as well as the community wisdom of our farmers and fishers, organizations, residents, and neighbours.

Together, we will act to create a just, healthy, and sustainable food system for the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Photo: Nourish NS

JustFOOD Action Plan Development

The development of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* is co-led by HRM and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA).

Formed in 2013, the HFPA is a partnership of diverse individuals and organizations representing the food system, led by members including the Ecology Action Centre, Nova Scotia Health Public Health, Nova Scotia Health Community Health Boards - Central Zone, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University, Feed Nova Scotia, and Halifax Public Libraries. The HFPA has over 700 supporters and 2,200 social media followers.

Overview

In 2017, the HFPA released the *HRM Food Charter*. This document envisions a food system that will strengthen the health of our people, our communities, and our ecosystems. In 2019, Halifax Regional Council endorsed the *HRM Food Charter* and committed to supporting the development of a municipal food strategy, the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*.

Photo: Emily Stevens

Engagement

Public engagement for the Plan began in March 2021, with the majority of engagements wrapping up in August 2022. Engagements were designed to ensure that community concerns and aspirations were consistently understood, considered, and directly reflected in Plan recommendations. Public engagement was further intended to (1) profile the local food system; (2) identify measurable goals, priorities, and actions for the *JustFOOD Action Plan*; (3) foster relationships and readiness for action among key local partners; and (4) encourage community members to take part in food system action.

Engagement opportunities were planned in consultation with community partners. A variety of supports were provided to reduce participation barriers, and compensation was provided to community members. Some of the methods used to capture public feedback included online surveys, focus groups, community-hosted workshops, and take-home meal kits accompanied by conversation guides.

HRM AND THE HFPA ENGAGED WITH:

- **29 community-based organizations**
- **6 provincial partners**
- **9 HRM business units**
- **Thousands of HRM residents**

A summary of engagement activities can be found on page 34, and a detailed report can be found in Appendix 2.

Based on engagement feedback and food system research, HRM and the HFPA chose to structure Plan recommendations according to the pillars of the **Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP)**. MUFPP is an international protocol aimed at tackling food-related issues at the municipal level.

Influenced by this pact, the following principles are used to structure the *JustFOOD Action Plan*:

- **Governance**
- **Social and Economic Equity**
- **Food Production**
- **Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution**
- **Health, Wellness, and Resilience**
- **Food Waste**

The proposed recommendations associated with each of these principles are designed to mobilize community, government, and other key actors to take collaborative and coordinated action on food system issues and advance food system transformation.

Recommendations were carefully crafted using engagement feedback. Recommendations were also drafted using ongoing research and best practices from other regions. Early drafts were shared with community partners and key actors for feedback and comment.

JustFOOD Development Timeline

2013

HALIFAX FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

HFPA formed

2014

Food Counts: Halifax Food Assessment released

2017

HRM Food Charter created

2019

Halifax Regional Council endorsed ***HRM Food Charter*** & co-development of the ***JustFOOD Action Plan***

2020

Early awareness building for the *JustFOOD Action Plan*

JustFOOD Framework drafted

Engagement Plan developed

2021-2022

Phase One Engagement

Virtual Workshop #1: outcomes included refined *JustFOOD Action Plan* goals, Framework 2.0, and story of JustFOOD

Virtual Workshop #2: outcomes included identification of actions for the *JustFOOD Action Plan*

500 Civic Dinner kits distributed

JustFOOD website launched

JustFOOD Survey launched

2022

Phase Two Engagement

Targeted engagement sessions held with priority populations

JustFOOD Action Plan Draft Part A circulated for partner feedback

Plan Principles and Structure

The *JustFOOD Action Plan* assigns a set of recommendations to each of the six structural principles. The aims of each principle are outlined here:

Governance recommendations aim to facilitate collaboration across government agencies and departments, align policies and programs that impact the food system, establish knowledge-sharing mechanisms, and develop strategies to monitor progress.

Social and Economic Equity recommendations aim to increase community-level food sovereignty, recognizing that significant system-level change requires a shift away from charitable models. The recommendations aim to ensure that everyone is able to produce, prepare, and access food safely and with dignity, and that food system work directly addresses racial inequities and the root causes of food insecurity.

- **African Nova Scotian Food Justice and Sovereignty** recommendations aim to celebrate the unique and vibrant food culture of the African Nova Scotian community, support strong traditions of homesteading and agriculture, and advance African Nova Scotian and Black food sovereignty.
- **Indigenous Food Justice and Sovereignty** recommendations aim to enable and support Indigenous Peoples in their right to access healthy and culturally preferred foods as well as to exercise autonomy over where and how their food is produced, harvested, hunted, and fished. Indigenous food sovereignty necessitates the right to self-determination of Indigenous food systems.

Food Production recommendations aim to support producer livelihoods and strengthen sustainable local food production by providing resources and services to urban and rural food producers, developing the infrastructure needed to support a local food system, enabling secure access to land for sustainable food production, and supporting short food chains.

Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution recommendations aim to ensure a sustainable, fair, reliable, and efficient supply and distribution of food into and within the municipality.

Health, Wellness, and Resilience recommendations aim to promote and support access to nutritious food and create the conditions for healthy food environments while promoting sustainable diets.These actions also aim to strengthen ecological resilience through improved air, water, and soil quality, and increased biodiversity. As climate change continues to threaten our food system, protecting the health of our environment is critical to strengthening community-level health and resilience.

Food Waste recommendations aim to support the municipality to sustainably manage and reduce food waste by recovering and redistributing food, raising awareness of food loss and waste, and enabling effective composting.

Next Steps

Request that Halifax Regional Council sign onto the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

By signing on to MUFPP, HRM will join a community of cities committed to the development of:

> "Sustainable food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse, that provide healthy and affordable food to all people in a human rights-based framework, that minimize waste and conserve biodiversity while adapting to and mitigating impacts of climate change."

As an official signatory, HRM will have access to an established monitoring framework to measure the impact of actions and compare progress with other jurisdictions using the same benchmarks.

Establish JustFOOD Working Groups

Following the public launch of Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, HRM and the HFPA will establish formal JustFOOD Working Groups. These groups will be responsible for developing the implementation strategies in Part B of the Plan.

JustFOOD Working Groups will bring together a range of community and government partners with both professional and lived experience. The working-group model is a community-based, collective-impact approach to implementing key recommendations while building greater capacity for food system change in HRM. JustFOOD Working Group members will be compensated for their time and expertise; however, it is anticipated that some members' involvement may be covered by their employers.

Formalize Commitments and Develop Implementation Strategies

When Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* is released, JustFOOD Working Groups will begin to develop implementation strategies. Part B of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* will detail these implementation strategies and will include commitments to action on behalf of food system partners. A final Plan, comprising both Part A and Part B, will be brought to Halifax Regional Council for endorsement in 2023.

Photo: Snickerdoodle Photography

Form a Food Policy Council

Implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* will require cross-sector governance. HRM and the HFPA propose that a Food Policy Council be created to replace the HFPA as a collaborative governing body. The proposed Food Policy Council is anticipated to act as a legal entity that will be tasked with coordinating, guiding, and evaluating the implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, which will include oversight of the JustFOOD Working Groups.

A governance report that details considerations and provides a recommended model, entitled Governance Structures for the Regional Food System in HRM, has been prepared by partners at the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University (**see Appendix 1**).

Monitor Progress

Recommendations in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* are based on the six categories of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. By signing onto MUFPP, HRM will be able to use an established monitoring framework to measure the impact of actions in the region and compare progress with other jurisdictions using the same benchmarks. The proposed Food Policy Council will track and review progress to ensure that (1) the council is operating effectively and adapting to the complex work of food system change and (2) the priority recommendations made in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* are progressing. Monitoring steps will include:

- Publishing an annual review of a selection of *JustFOOD Action Plan* indicators
- Providing regular updates on implementation progress, including an annual update to Halifax Regional Council and a comprehensive five-year review
- Reporting interim progress online at justfoodhalifax.ca
- Using the virtual food hub to share Plan progress, identify emerging issues, and adapt recommendations based on research and ongoing discussion
- Using community-based tools for both external and internal evaluation to increase the positive impact of *JustFOOD Action Plan* on our food system while supporting citizen-driven change

First-Year Recommendations

The recommendations made in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* reflect extensive community and partner feedback as well as best practices. They are at different stages, some with significant progress like the coalition developing a business plan for the Halifax Regional Food Hub, some with initial work like the beta version of the Food4All map, and many with work yet to begin.

HRM and the HFPA recognize that a Food Policy Council cannot immediately tackle every recommendation made in the Plan and that work is required to create a solid foundation for collective action, leadership, and shared responsibilities. The following table identifies 10 priority recommendations for the first year of Plan implementation.

GOAL	YEAR 1 PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS
Establish foundational food system governance mechanisms.	**1.** Establish and fund a Food Policy Council. **9d.** Use key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate Plan progress.
Establish a central repository of food system resources.	**5.** Create a virtual community food hub. **6a.** Expand the Food4All food resource map.
Support food sovereignty efforts among equity seeking communities.	**2.** Support the development of an Indigenous Food Governance Model and an African Nova Scotian Food Policy Council. Secure funding for both.
Support community-based food programs and grassroots initiatives that provide dignified access to good food.	**1b.i.** Develop a sustainable funding stream for community-based and grassroots food initiatives.
Create an enabling municipal environment for the supply, processing, and distribution of local food.	**17.** Use municipal facilities and assets to offer food programs, grow food, and support public food infrastructure. **38d.** Allow community food markets, food-distribution hubs, and stable community supported agriculture distribution sites in municipal spaces.
Support community gardens and urban farms as important sites of urban food production and social inclusion.	**32b.i.** Establish a community plots program. **32b.ii.** Create and fund a community garden and municipal food-production staff position.

Background Report

JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART A - FEBRUARY 2023

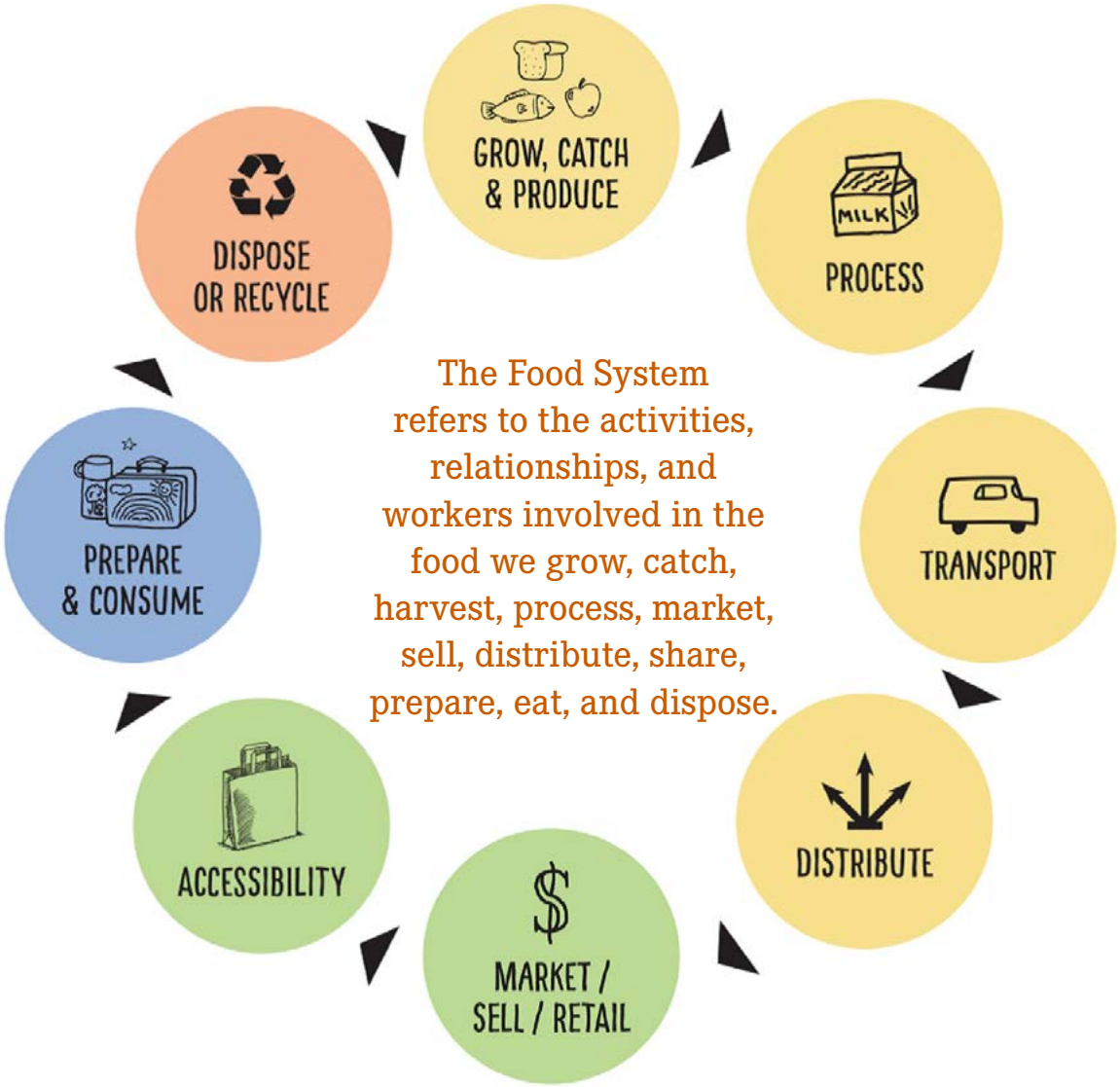
HALIFAX

HALIFAX FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

Foundations

Food connects us all. It nourishes and sustains us and is at the heart of celebrations across diverse cultures and traditions. A strong and resilient **food system** can foster vibrant neighbourhoods, generate thriving businesses, and restore traditional livelihoods. In contrast, the inherent risks of a weak food system are enormous, threatening community resilience, the environment, our economy, and our well-being.

The *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region* is a long-range strategy for building a healthy, just, and sustainable food system. As the region's first food strategy, the *JustFOOD Action Plan* proposes measurable steps to support community food security based on a vision of HRM in which no one is hungry, food and people are celebrated, the local economy is strong, and the environment is protected for generations to come. The *JustFOOD Action Plan* recognizes that while food is a universal right, structural inequities challenge equitable access.



Foundational concepts of the JustFOOD approach to food system change:

FOOD JUSTICE seeks to ensure that the benefits and risks of where, what, and how food is grown, produced, transported, distributed, accessed, and eaten are shared among us.[3] People working within a just food system are treated with dignity and are compensated fairly. Just food systems ensure that people have equitable opportunities to participate in food system activities and to take part in decisions that affect them.[4]

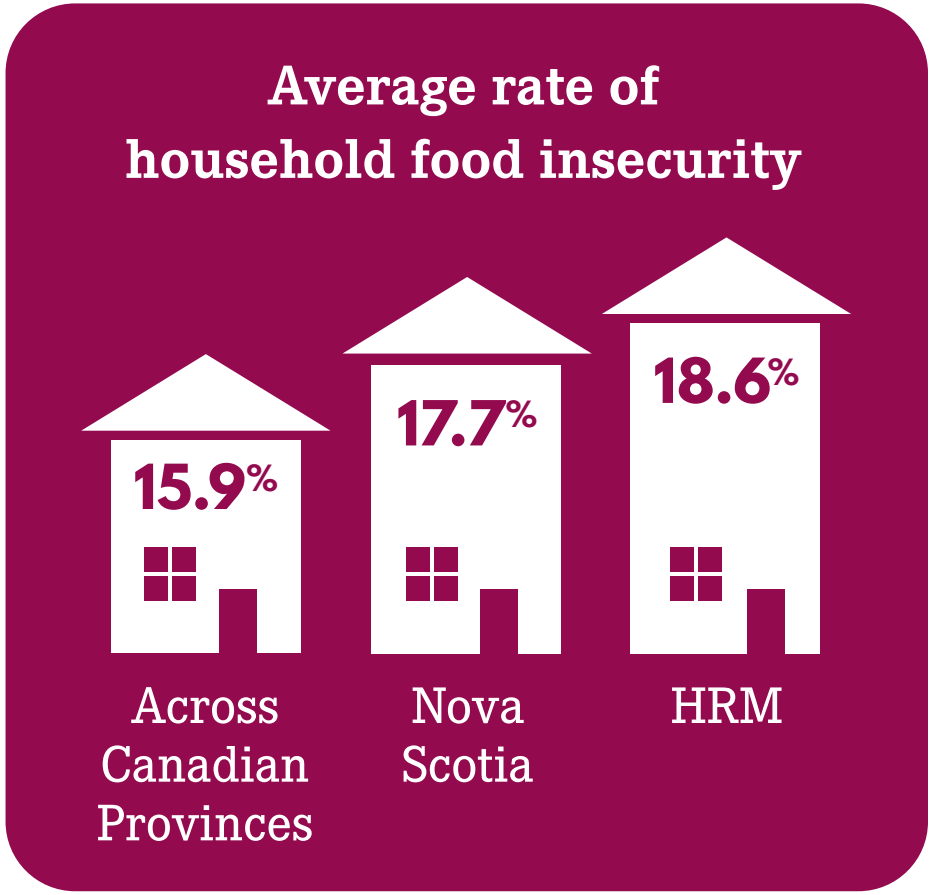
FOOD SOVEREIGNTY is the right of peoples to define their own food systems, including the right to healthy and culturally preferred food, produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods.[5]

HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS provide supportive environments for equitable access to safe and nutritious foods as a resource for physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental health for all people. In a healthy food system, people are able to satisfy their needs and preferences, and have the knowledge, resources, and support necessary to do so.[6]

SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS maintain the health of the environment without jeopardizing the ability of current and future generations to harvest and produce (farm, fish, hunt, and forage) food.[7]

HOUSEHOLD FOOD INSECURITY is the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints.[8]

COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY exists when all residents have access to enough good food from a food system that maximizes food sovereignty and justice and can be sustained for generations to come.[9]



Why JustFOOD?

The average rate of **household food insecurity** across Canada's 10 provinces is 15.9%.[10] An estimated 17.7% of households in Nova Scotia are food insecure, whereas an estimated 18.6% of households in HRM are food insecure.[11] With rates of household food insecurity higher than both the provincial and national average, HRM requires significant and coordinated effort to strengthen the local food system and increase access to good food.

As HRM continues to grow rapidly, we have a unique opportunity to invest in our food system. A strong regional food system can reduce food insecurity and inequities, support the livelihoods of producers and food workers, support inclusive economic growth, enhance our ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and promote the health and well-being of all residents. Food system solutions must build on the expertise of food system innovators as well as the community wisdom of our farmers and fishers, organizations, residents, and neighbours. Solutions must increase both community and food system resilience. Success will depend on collaboration among government, individuals, businesses, and agencies, each understanding their unique role and contribution to food system change.

To identify and address gaps in our food system, we need a guiding strategy. The *JustFOOD Action Plan* is that strategy. It lays the groundwork for developing a food system that promotes health, sustainability, and economic prosperity. It is driven by collective action and accountability and, above all, it envisions a more equitable food system that reflects both the needs and tremendous strengths of the diverse people who live here.

Food and Municipalities

The power to make policies and actions that impact our food exists across federal, provincial, municipal, and Indigenous governments. Municipalities are uniquely positioned to support our food system as they are responsible for the ways in which communities are designed. They also control many of the crucial services, policies, and infrastructure that impact the local food system. For example, food policy spans many municipal domains, such as transportation, housing, economic development, planning, emergency response, and health promotion. Municipal policies and services can impact food system activities, such as where and how food is produced, sold, and distributed as well as the creation of and value placed on food waste. Many of our public institutions (including local universities, hospitals, libraries, and long-term care facilities) procure, promote, and share knowledge about food. HRM's community centres and libraries, as well as countless community-based organizations, promote food literacy and support residents in accessing healthy and affordable food.

As the level of government with the most direct contact with residents, municipalities also have a responsibility to demonstrate best practices and maximize community assets. Municipalities are increasingly taking a strategic role in building equitable and sustainable food systems, developing policies and programs that address the struggles of fishers and farmers; the inequities that impact people's ability to access food; and the many impacts of the food system on public health, the regional economy, and the environment. Local governments may be limited in their ability to directly impact the low-income status of residents or poverty rates across the region. However, they can prioritize and influence related factors such as affordable housing and local economic development, which can positively impact household income. Municipalities can work with their provincial and federal counterparts to ensure that comprehensive and cross-jurisdictional approaches result in adequate incomes and poverty elimination.

Our Food System

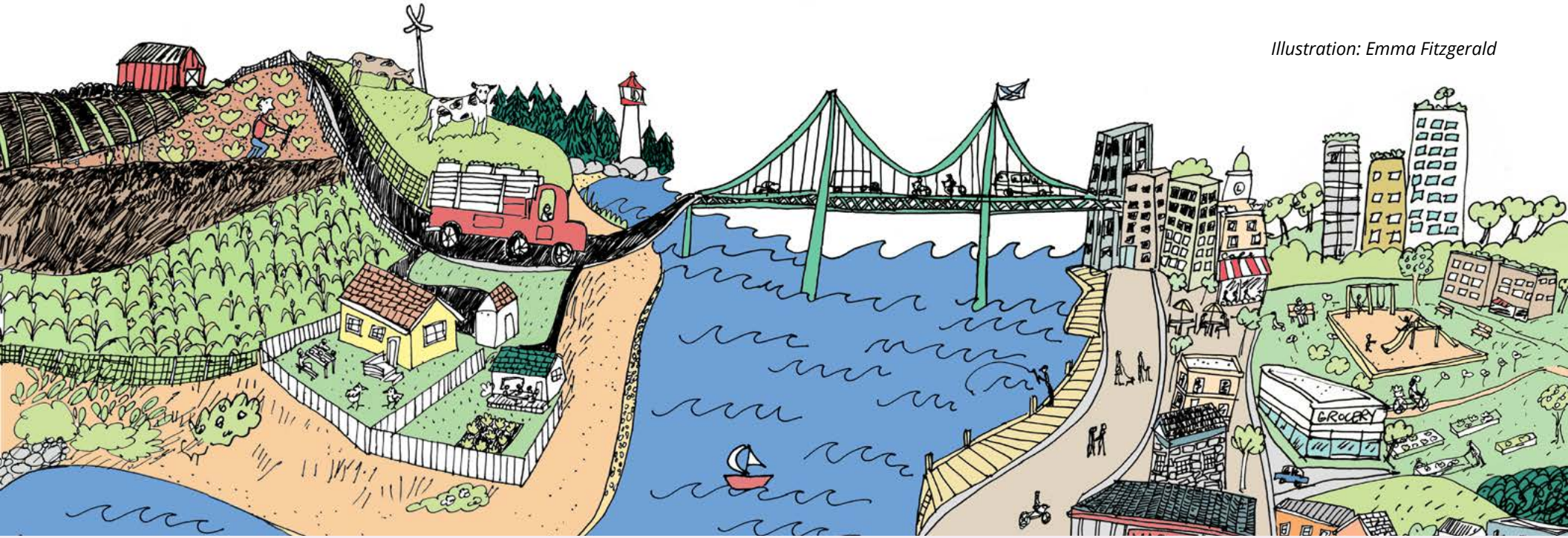
Halifax Regional Municipality

Halifax Regional Municipality is located in K'jipuktuk, the unceded traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq Nation. HRM has a rich cultural fabric and a long history of fishing, farming, and community self-reliance. It is surrounded by the fertile farmlands and fishing grounds of Nova Scotia and is home to unique coastal communities that have farming and fishing embedded in their social and economic fabric. **Food Counts** states that Nova Scotia has an:

Nova Scotia has an "optimal combination of soil, water, climate, and infrastructure to support small-scale agriculture." [12]

HRM continues to define its place in food system governance within Mi'kma'ki, Nova Scotia, and in Canada. To date, important food system links have been made in municipal plans such as the ***Halifax Economic Growth Plan***, the ***Integrated Mobility Plan***, and ***HalifACT 2050: Acting on Climate Together***, among **other regional-planning documents**. The adoption of food system thinking at the municipal level facilitates collaboration between and among other levels of government, the agri-food industry, institutions, and community organizations. In co-leading the development of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*, HRM has committed to advancing food system goals within the municipal sphere of influence while collaborating with diverse food system actors to champion and take action on system-level change.

Illustration: Emma Fitzgerald



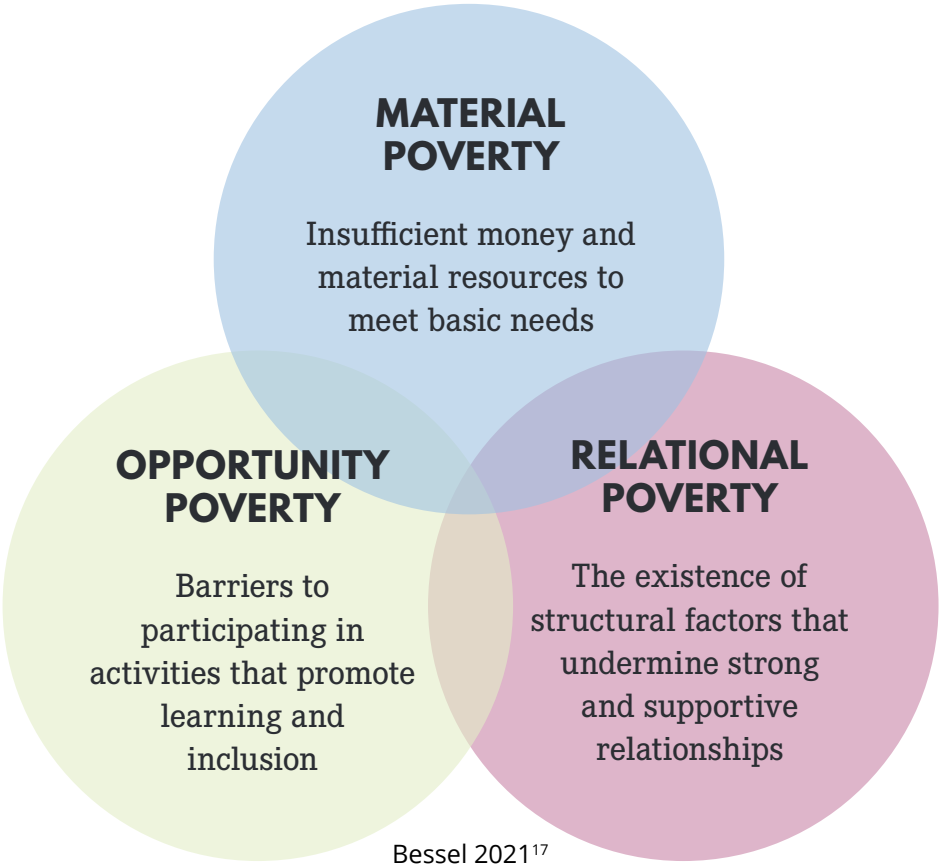
Food and Equity in HRM

Food access is affected by a variety of factors, including inadequate income, systemic racism and oppression, precarious work and low wages, lack of affordable housing, and lack of affordable childcare. Although work is under way to advance food-security policies and programs, many Nova Scotia residents cannot obtain the food they need.

Income is the strongest predictor of food insecurity. In 2020, the poverty rate in HRM was 8.3% as measured by the share of the population with income below the **Market Basket Measure**. This was the highest rate across benchmark cities.[13] In 2021, child poverty was 30.8%, varying from 9% to 45.5% based on the community.[14] Children who are visible minorities or newcomers are more likely to live in poverty, reflecting the deep social disparities across our region. Likewise, the highest rates of food insecurity in Canada are found among households where respondents identified as Indigenous or Black. People identifying as white have a lower prevalence of food insecurity than any other group, demonstrating the serious health consequences of Canada's long and ongoing history of colonialism and systemic racism.[15]

It is also important to recognize that food insecurity is a serious problem for members of the workforce. Employment does not guarantee household food security; low-wages and precarious employment make it difficult for many to afford the food they need. National reports from the past 10 years have consistently shown that 60-65% of food-insecure households are in the workforce and earn income from employment wages or salaries. As the cost of living rises, low and stagnant wages leave workers unable to afford the food they need. Within Nova Scotia, household types found to be the most vulnerable to food insecurity were lone-parent families – especially single mothers – and unattached individuals living alone.[16]

Market Basket Measure refers to the measure of low income based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services representing a modest, basic standard of living developed by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).



Bessel 2021[17]

Poverty is multidimensional. Due to the strong connections between income and household food insecurity, income-based solutions are critical in order to address the root causes of household food insecurity. [17]

Income is the strongest determinant of household food security

Although financial constraints are the strongest predictor of household food insecurity, the physical accessibility of quality, affordable food also impacts food security. The physical inaccessibility of food is associated with the location of food resources, inadequate public transit, insufficient pedestrian connectivity, and a person or family's inability to own or obtain a vehicle. Rural areas and residential areas with clusters of low-income households are the most susceptible to food inaccessibility.

Within HRM, the following communities have been identified as experiencing the highest rates of poverty: Dartmouth North, Fairview, Spryfield, the Prestons, and the eastern rural communities.[18] On the Halifax Peninsula, poverty rates are highest in areas of the North End, Downtown, and South End with concentrations of low-income or student housing.[19] Enabling access to affordable and healthy foods is essential to public health and to the creation of healthy urban environments. Work is also underway to use recent statistics and methodologies to identify HRM communities at the highest risk for food insecurity, to inform strategy development in Part B as well as priorities for investment and emergency management.

Food Production in HRM

HRM is home to a variety of urban and rural farm-production activities, from cattle ranching to fruit and tree nut farming. In 2021, HRM farmed 11,085 hectares of land (27,932 acres), and representinged approximately 3.6% of the agricultural industry in Nova Scotia. The average farm size increased from 191 acres in 2016 to 216 acres in 2021. Although HRM-based farms account for 5% of all farms in Nova Scotia, the number of farms in HRM has decreased from 164 in 2011 to 127 in 2021. Despite the region's rich agricultural history, farmers face a multitude of challenges including rising input costs, low food prices, climate change, and aging populations. With rising operating expenses and stagnant revenue, many farms in Nova Scotia are now earning negative net income.

Community gardening and small-scale urban agriculture continue to grow in the Region. At last count, there were:

- **41 community gardens on non-municipal land,**
- **29 school gardens,**
- **22 community gardens on municipal land, through the Community Gardens Program,**
- **6 urban/heritage farms,**
- **4 community greenhouses,**
- **3 seed libraries, and**
- **1 urban orchard at Leighton Dillman Park (Dartmouth Commons).**

While the COVID-19 pandemic has increased interest in growing food, with record seed sales, it has been challenging for many community based gardening programs. For example, the number of schools with gardens dropped 35% from 2020 to 2022, with 29 currently in operation in contrast to 45 prior to the pandemic.*

Although agriculture is not a dominant industry in HRM, there is great potential to support urban and rural producers and to revitalize local farms.[20] Support for producers must address the impacts of climate change on the food system. Already on the frontlines, Maritime farmers have begun to adapt to ongoing seasonal frost changes, midsummer heat waves, and periods of drought. To learn more about the impacts of climate change on food production, visit the "Health, Wellness, and Resilience in HRM" section of this report.

> **"You don't need a big field to raise a big turnip."**
>
> - Joseph Howe

** Sourced from the HRCE School Nutritionist October 17, 2022*

Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution in HRM

To understand the complex dynamics of regional food systems, it can be helpful to think about a region's foodshed.

A foodshed is the geographic area that supplies a population – in a city, town, or community – with food.

In Nova Scotia, the average distance a food item travels from farm to plate is 3,976 kilometers,[21] and in 2010, only 13% of money that Nova Scotians spent on food was on food produced in the province. This indicates our heavy reliance on non-local and global food supply chains.[22] Although more recent estimates on the amount of money Nova Scotians are spending on local food are not available, the Province aims to increase local consumption to 20% by 2030 through the implementation of the forthcoming *Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy*.[23]

In December 2022, HRM had 2,224 licensed food establishments in the region, including restaurants, day care centres, market vendors, food trucks, corner stores, specialty food shops, and grocery stores. This includes 58 market supply outlets (e.g., grocery stores and large everyday product stores like Walmart and Costco) and 269 basic food supply outlets (e.g., corner stores, specialty food shops, and markets).

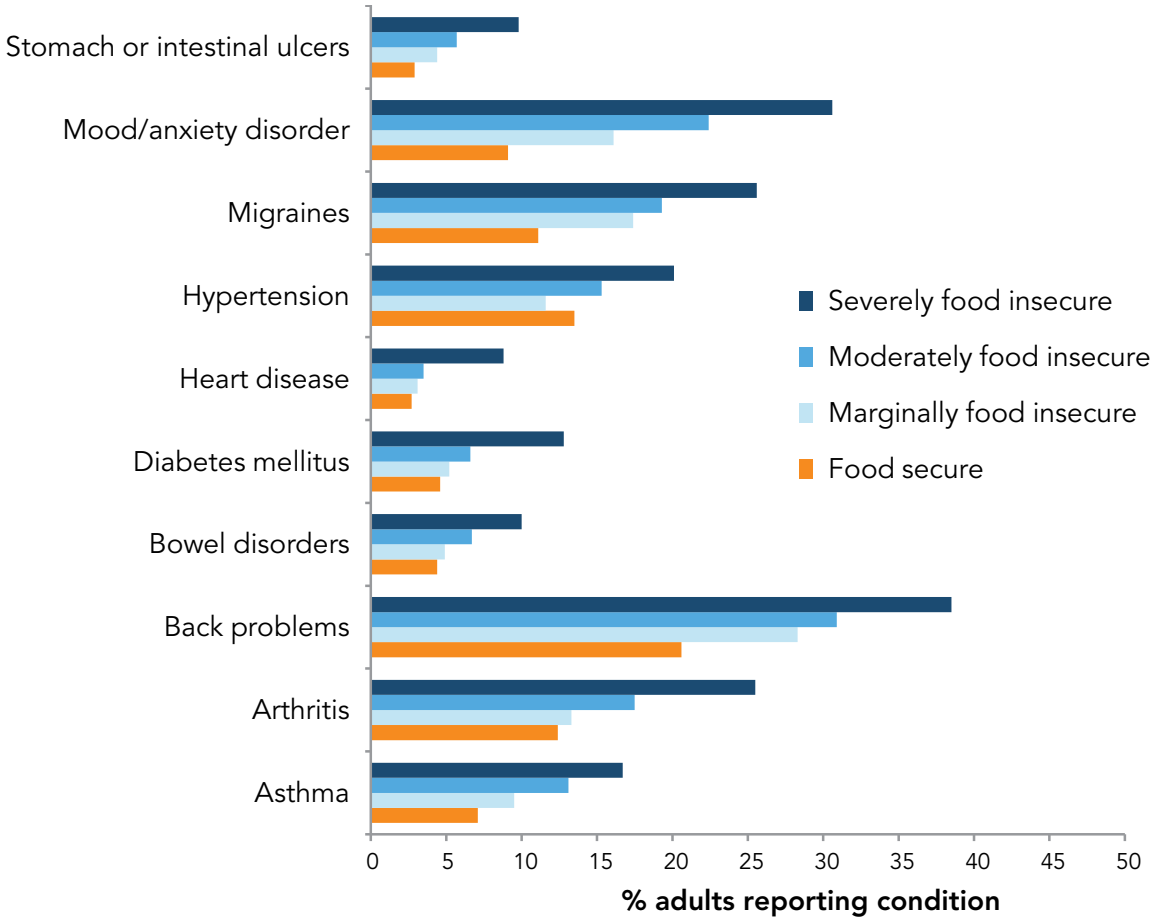
Approximately 69,000 HRM residents (15%) live within 300 meters of a basic food and everyday supply outlet and 51,000 residents (11%) were estimated to live within 500 meters of a market supply outlet.[24] With a population of in excess of 460,000, these numbers demonstrate that the majority of HRM residents cannot readily access somewhere to buy groceries and supplies. Physical access could be further complicated by a lack of or costly transportation options , mobility issues, and other factors. Further research is also required on existing food outlets to consider the quality, affordability, suitability, and other features of the food on offer to consider their impact on food access.

Shifts in the grocery industry have also concentrated the number and locations of stores. The increasing consolidation of the agri-food industry and supply chains over time has resulted in the loss of autonomy and power for both local farmers and consumers. For example, it is estimated that just three major players control 78% of grocery sales in Nova Scotia.[25] The enormous market power wielded by a handful of companies dramatically reduces competition in agricultural markets as well as prices paid to farmers. However, the Municipality can act to support local producers and food retailers by resisting consolidation and building local food system power.

Health, Wellness, and Resilience in HRM

Food insecurity is a social determinant of health, a non-medical factor that influences health outcomes. What we eat and our access to nutrition impacts our well-being. For example, food insecurity negatively impacts physical, mental, and social health. Healthcare costs among severely food-insecure adults are more than double that of food-secure adults, even after adjusting for well-established social determinants of health.[26]

Prevalence of chronic conditions among Canadian adults (18-64 years of age), by household food security status[26]



It is also important to acknowledge that the health and resilience of our food system is largely dependent on the health of our environment. Climate change is an immediate crisis threatening the health and stability of our food system. Likewise, our current food system activities result in greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

As a coastal region, HRM's food system is particularly vulnerable to climate change. Looking ahead, we can expect more extreme weather events and temperatures; the introduction of invasive species and pests; and rising sea levels, leading to crop damage and failure, poor livestock health, and compromised water quality and irrigation. All of these will negatively impact food security and can negatively affect the nutritional quality of our food.

Key food system activities vulnerable to climate change are:

- Production
- Processing
- Distribution
- Preparation
- Consumption

Distribution is especially vulnerable as Atlantic Canada relies on non-local, global food networks, which increases the vulnerability of our food system to issues of produce availability, affordability, and quality control.

In 2019, acting in response to the predicted and already observed impacts of climate change, HRM declared a climate emergency, joining countries and major cities around the world as well as nearly 500 Canadian municipalities. In 2020, Halifax Regional Council unanimously adopted ***HalifACT 2050: Acting on Climate Together***. This Plan recognizes that climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts will improve food system resilience and build food security for those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, especially as climate impacts to the food system are not borne equally.

Climate vulnerability varies widely according to sociodemographic factors such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, class, physical environment, and (dis)ability. Indigenous, Black, and racialized communities face disproportionate risks rooted in a national legacy of settler colonialism, white supremacy, and systematic dispossession. Both food justice and climate justice rely on environmental stewardship, land access, and labor practices that equitably redistribute power and build resilience and agency among land defenders, farmers, food chain workers, and consumers.

Emergency Food Planning

There are significant knowledge gaps regarding emergency preparedness and the current capacity of the municipality to be self-sustaining in times of emergency and crisis. For example, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments and community food providers scrambled to assess community needs, identify available food sources and products, and determine what community-based supports were available. Organizations spent considerable time and effort identifying various ways to meet community members' basic food needs. During recent extreme weather events, emergency responders faced considerable difficulty in providing residents with hot meals and access to food. Emergency food responses were challenged by the need to identify communities with the greatest need for support. Responders also faced barriers to identifying service providers and spaces that were available to support the sourcing, storage, preparation, and distribution of food. These difficulties were further compounded by phone and internet outages.

As our climate continues to change, extreme weather events are expected to become more frequent and severe. Multi-day power outages will result in food spoilage, limited ability to prepare food, and the exacerbation of pre-existing food-access issues. In addition to climate change pressures, our food system is extremely vulnerable to disruptions in international supply chains, and until our food system is more localized, the need for emergency food relief is expected to increase. There is a critical need for a strategy to unite efforts to anticipate and prepare for food needs during emergencies and crises. With input from key partners across governments, community organizations, and businesses, a joint strategy will support an efficient and effective emergency food response.

Food and COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated the many gaps in our food system, making clear the extent of food insecurity across the region and the essential roles played by our food producers and food workers.

HRM and the HFPA conducted an online survey to learn about food experiences during the pandemic. Results indicated that during the height of the pandemic, the number of respondents reporting difficulty accessing food or worrying about not having enough food was 10% higher than in pre-pandemic times. A total of 57.6% of respondents reported facing additional challenges accessing food. COVID-19 further demonstrated the need for an emergency food strategy to guide food access during times of crises.

Entering the pandemic's recovery phase, many households continue to struggle to afford food as the cost of food and shelter have significantly increased. With financial constraints being the root cause for household food insecurity, income-based solutions are required.

Food Waste in HRM

Food waste refers to any food discarded or degraded at the point of retail or through consumer use. Food is a precious resource, and it is therefore important to prioritize efforts to avoid and reduce wastage.

Globally, 20 – 30% of food is lost or wasted before reaching the consumer.[27] In 2022, the **National Zero Waste Council** found that an estimated 63% of the food thrown away in Canadian households could have been eaten. Each Canadian household wastes roughly 140 kg of food annually.[28] HRM currently diverts approximately 53,000 tonnes of organic waste from landfill disposal each year through composting.

In fact, HRM was one of the first municipalities in Canada to develop and implement a green cart program in the late 1990s. In 2017, HRM approved the Organics Management Strategy, which recommended the development of a new processing facility to replace two aging facilities. This 60,000 tonne per year facility is planned to be commissioned in 2024 and will incorporate advanced screening equipment to ensure contamination such as plastic, glass, and foils are effectively removed from the produced compost. The compost produced at the new facility will meet the 2010 NS Environment Composting Facility Guidelines. It is anticipated that one of the key markets for this compost will be the Nova Scotian agricultural community.

Preventing food waste is critical to fostering a circular economy, or an "economic model that aims to avoid waste and to preserve the value of resources (raw materials, energy and water) for as long as possible. Products and materials are continuously (re) circulated – as opposed to a linear model in which they are discarded as waste after use." In a circular economy, "waste" becomes a valuable resource and is used to regenerate our natural systems. A circular economy approach to preventing or otherwise addressing food waste at the municipal level will require ongoing policy reform and program development.

Development of the JustFOOD Action Plan

The development of Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* is the outcome of nearly a decade of work. A timeline highlighting each milestone achieved can be found in the "Executive Summary."

Halifax Food Policy Alliance

Formed in 2013, the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA) is a multi-sectoral partnership of individuals and organizations working towards a common vision of a Halifax: **where no one is hungry and everyone has nutritious food that they enjoy, for generations to come, sustained by local producers.** Connected to a network of over 700 supporters from across the food system and 2,200 social media followers, the HFPA is currently co-chaired by HRM and the Ecology Action Centre. It encompasses members such as Nova Scotia Health Public Health, Feed Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Health Community Health Boards - Central Zone, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University, and Halifax Public Libraries.

The HFPA has been the driving force behind the development of an HRM food strategy and has built the rationale and capacity for the JustFOOD Plan through three areas of influence:

1. **SUPPORTING HEALTHY CHANGE**: influencing policy and coordinating action to bring healthy food to everyone

2. **LEADING INFORMED ACTION**: using evidence and insights from those with lived experience to inform action

3. **CONVENING COMMUNITY**: connecting with others to have important conversations and to mobilize food-focused action and advocacy

Food Counts

In 2014, the HFPA released **Food Counts: Halifax Food Assessment**, a point-in-time assessment of the HRM's food system. Food Counts uses qualitative and quantitative data to answer two questions: (1) what is the current state of our food system? and (2) how does our food system measure up in key criteria for community food security? The report identified many strengths, such as HRM's longstanding history of fishing and farming, robust public interest in urban food production, and the growing enthusiasm for local food consumption. However, several areas of improvement were also identified. Findings indicated high rates of household food insecurity, an apparent loss of community-based food-related knowledge and skills, and high chronic disease rates. Farmers and fishers were also identified as struggling to make an adequate living. These findings, among others, catalyzed the development of a food strategy and laid the foundations for many of the recommendations in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.

HRM Food Charter

In 2017, the HFPA released the **HRM Food Charter**, which presents a vision for a food system that will strengthen the health of our people, our communities, and our ecosystems. It is both a declaration and a call to action for a coordinated effort to revitalize and strengthen a locally based, sustainable food system for HRM. The *HRM Food Charter* was endorsed by Halifax Regional Council in December 2019 and outlines five principles to guide the work of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.

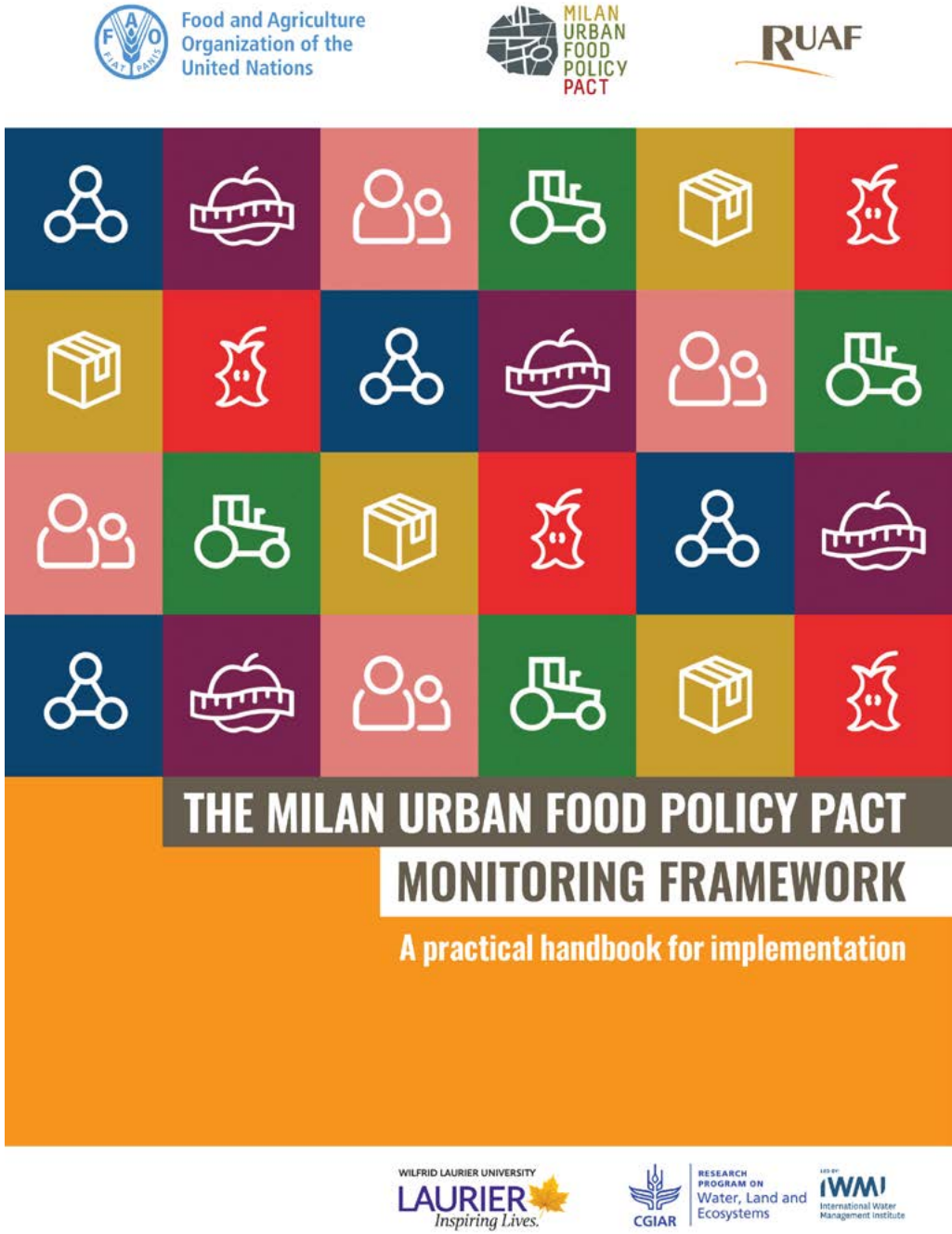
Following the adoption of the *HRM Food Charter*, HRM and the HFPA focused on building support for the creation of a municipal food strategy. The five *HRM Food Charter* principles provided structure for gathering community feedback and developing early draft recommendations and actions. These five principles align closely with those of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), an international agreement on urban food policies, and as such, HRM and the HFPA made the decision to organize the *JustFOOD Action Plan* according to the MUFPP.

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

Municipalities are increasingly seen as leaders on food system issues, with both the obligation and ability to advance progress around regional, national, and international commitments and goals. In 2014, the Mayor of Milan launched an international protocol aimed at tackling food-related issues at the urban level recognizing that cities are where governments are closest to residents, local issues, and corresponding opportunities. To date, the MUFPP has been signed by more than 240 cities. It is both a declaration and a concrete working tool with a framework for action that lists 37 recommendations and 44 indicators to monitor progress.

The recommendations are grouped using six pillars: (1) governance; (2) sustainable diets and nutrition; (3) social and economic equity; (4) food production; (5) food supply and distribution; and (6) food waste.

The MUFPP identifies impact areas and frameworks that can be adapted to local contexts. The associated tools are designed to help cities, big and small, align with a global network of practitioners and policy-makers who are at the forefront of urban food system transformation. The six MUFPP pillars have been used to shape the framework of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*. As a result, the Plan will build off the wisdom and rigour of the MUFPP to identify areas of impact and align progress indicators with national and international movements.



Plan Structure and Action Areas

The *JustFOOD Action Plan* will enable communities, government, and other key actors to take collaborative and coordinated action on food system issues, advancing food system transformation. The *JustFOOD Action Plan* assigns a set of recommendations to each of the six structural principles. The aims of each principle are outlined here.

Governance recommendations aim to facilitate collaboration across and among government agencies and departments; align policies and programs that impact the food system, establish knowledge-sharing mechanisms; and develop strategies to monitor progress. These recommendations may require the Municipality to act directly, support partners, or advocate for change.

Social and Economic Equity recommendations help increase community-level food sovereignty. We must ensure that everyone is able to produce, prepare, and access food safely and with dignity by equipping communities with food system knowledge, skills, and expertise; developing food policies and programs that address and improve social inclusion; and tackling the roots of food insecurity and injustice.

African Nova Scotian Food Justice and Sovereignty recommendations aim to celebrate the unique and vibrant food culture of the African Nova Scotian community, support strong traditions of homesteading and agriculture, and advance African Nova Scotian and Black food sovereignty.

Indigenous Food Justice and Sovereignty recommendations aim to enable and support Indigenous Peoples in their right to access healthy and culturally preferred foods and exercise autonomy over where and how their food is produced, harvested, hunted, and fished.

Food Production recommendations aim to support producer livelihoods and strengthen sustainable food production by providing resources and services to urban and rural food producers, developing the infrastructure needed to support a local food system, enabling secure access to land for sustainable food production, and otherwise supporting short food chains.

Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution recommendations aim to ensure a sustainable, fair, reliable, and efficient supply and distribution of food into, out of, and within the municipality.

Health, Wellness, and Resilience recommendations aim to promote and support access to nutritious food and create the conditions for healthy food environments while promoting sustainable diets. These recommendations also strengthen ecological resilience through improved air, water, and soil quality, and increased biodiversity.

Food Waste recommendations aim to support the municipality to sustainably manage and reduce food waste by recovering and redistributing food, raising awareness of food loss and waste, and enabling effective composting.

Although these recommendations exemplify many of the ways that we can work towards food system transformation, the Plan is not exhaustive. Much of the transformative work that the Plan hopes to progress will depend on building collective capacity and increasing our ability to tackle the root causes of food insecurity. The necessity of building collective capacity has been worked into each step of the implementation.

Summary of Engagement

JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART A - FEBRUARY 2023

HALIFAX

HALIFAX FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

Summary of Engagement

Engagement Overview

A detailed summary of engagement design and results can be found in Appendix 2.

Building on the ***HRM Food Charter***, initial engagements focused on refining the *HRM Food Charter* principles and vision to create and test the JustFOOD Framework (see Appendix 3), laying the foundations for working together toward action. Engagements then shifted to identifying what the community members and partners wanted the *JustFOOD Action Plan* to achieve, then to testing proposed recommendations to make sure they reflected this feedback. Part A recommendations were created with extensive input from community members and food system partners. Consultations for Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* began in March 2021 with the majority of engagements wrapping up in August 2022. During this time, HRM and the HFPA engaged with:

- **29 community-based organizations**
- **6 provincial partners**
- **9 HRM business units**
- **Thousands of HRM residents**

Engagement Priorities

HRM and the HFPA worked directly with the public to ensure that community concerns and aspirations were consistently understood, considered, and directly reflected in the Plan's recommendations. Public engagement was intended to (1) profile the local food system; (2) identify measurable goals, priorities, and recommendations for the *JustFOOD Action Plan*; (3) strengthen relationships and readiness for action among key local partners; and (4) motivate community members to take part in food system changes.

Knowledge and expertise lie within the communities that experience disproportionate rates of food insecurity. Engagement opportunities were designed to create space for these communities to shape Plan development, implementation, and outcomes. These opportunities were delivered in collaboration with trusted community partners and were designed to enable full and equitable participation. Participants were compensated for their time and expertise.

Engagement Design

Engagement for Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* was divided into two phases.

During Phase One of engagement, HRM and the HFPA solicited community and partner participation to create foundations for the Plan, identifying the key principles, goals, and strategies necessary to develop effective actions for positive food system change across communities and experiences. During Phase Two, HRM and the HFPA collected community and partner feedback on the recommendations generated during and following the first phase of engagement. This feedback was used to identify gaps, explore emerging opportunities, and revise proposed actions. HRM and the HFPA worked with community advisors during this review process.

As this work occurred during the pandemic, engagements were designed to prioritize public health and safety while providing space for lively dialogue. Virtual participation was encouraged when possible, and at-home participation opportunities were made available.

Building Awareness

Beginning in 2016, as a stepping stone to the development of a regional food strategy, HRM and the HFPA implemented an extensive engagement process for the development of the *HRM Food Charter*. Throughout this process, HRM and the HFPA built food system awareness, capacity, and excitement for the development of a food strategy based on community-led action and advocacy. Over 200 residents and 30 municipal staff and councillors participated in charter-based engagements. In December 2019, Halifax Regional Council endorsed the *HRM Food Charter* and the development of a food strategy for HRM.

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated the many gaps in our food system, making clear the extent of food insecurity across the region and the essential roles played by our food producers and food workers. Throughout 2020 and 2021, HRM provided food supports to more than 2,000 households, offering resources such as food hampers, food-activity kits, and food-production supplies. These outreach efforts supported community-level access to food, captured food experiences during the pandemic, and introduced residents to the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.

Photo: Snickerdoodle Photography

Phase One Engagement

Phase One of engagement began in March 2021 with the launch of the Food System Workshops series. This series of virtual workshops was designed to introduce the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, establish the foundations, and set Plan priorities. Following these workshops, the **JustFOOD website** and social media channels were launched to showcase the Plan's development and encourage participation. The *JustFOOD Engagement Toolkit* was created to support community partners to lead Civic Dinners and Hosted Engagements. The toolkit also functioned as a report-back tool to receive feedback on Plan goals.

During the latter half of Phase One, HRM and the HFPA offered residents and food system actors a variety of ways to be involved, recognizing diverse learners, abilities, and backgrounds. Community members were invited to shape the Plan by (1) participating in or hosting a **Civic Dinner**; (2) providing feedback through the JustFOOD Action Survey; and (3) participating in a Targeted Engagement. The JustFOOD Action Survey was distributed in hard copies and offered online. It was used to organize and compile feedback from all engagements. As part of Targeted Engagement efforts, HRM and the HFPA also organized dozens of meetings with community organizations, government officials, and other key food system actors. Phase One of engagement ended in March 2022 with the closure of the JustFOOD Action Survey.

Civic Dinner kits contained ingredients to make a pot of soup and a batch of granola bars for 6 to 8 people. Kits included a discussion guide to prompt conversations about food justice and how we can effect positive change within the HRM food system.

Phase Two Engagement

During Phase Two (March 2022 to August 2022), community members, Plan partners, and key food system actors were invited to give their feedback on Part A of the Plan. This feedback was used to refine and expand proposed recommendations. In an effort to ensure a fully comprehensive review of Part A, three distinct, community-led Advisory Groups – **an Indigenous Advisory**, **African Nova Scotian Advisory**, **and Disability Community Advisory** – were established to address gaps and to create new, community-specific actions where necessary. All advisory members were compensated. HRM and the HFPA also collected feedback from provincial and municipal subject matter experts.

Engagement Themes

Community members, partners, and key food system actors expressed a desire for a socially equitable food system where all community members are able to access nutritious and local food with dignity, and where food workers are valued and receive systemic government and consumer support.

Many participants identified the need for a food system that actively resists colonialism and white supremacy, and for a food system approach in which Black, Indigenous, and racialized leadership is prioritized.

Engagement participants also identified income as a root cause of food insecurity and recommended that a greater number of food-related social services be provided to low-income community members. They highlighted the need for a greater number of reduced-barrier food production and preparation spaces and tools, such as free food-skills workshops and improved access to growing spaces such as community gardens. Participants also recommended that the public sector address food system inequities through integrated land-use planning, transportation planning, and community design.

Generally, participants expressed a strong desire to see food at the hearts of our communities and identified food as a valuable tool that can bring people together. Many participants, particularly producers and other food system workers, expressed strong support for local food consumption and production, identifying small-scale, local food producers and retailers as key actors in the regional economy. They championed for communities to define their own food systems, where the means and ends of food production are accessible to all. Similarly, many voiced a need for infrastructure that builds local production, processing, and distribution power.

In summary, community members and partners highlighted the need for a comprehensive food strategy that acts to create a more equitable food system, addresses the root causes of food insecurity, localizes the food system, disrupts colonialism and systemic racism, and builds community capacity and food system resilience.

Recommendations

JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART A - FEBRUARY 2023

HALIFAX

HALIFAX FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

Recommendations

The recommendations made in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* reflect extensive community and partner feedback, best practices from other regions, and learnings gathered through work done by HRM and the HFPA. This section identifies Plan principles and recommendations for HRM, which will require collective action and shared responsibility. The proposed Food Policy Council and Working Groups will coordinate collective action and develop strategies to enhance the efforts of community partners. However, HRM and the HFPA recognize that a Food Policy Council cannot tackle every recommendation made in the Plan.

Recommendations are organized according to the six *JustFOOD Action Plan* principles: (1) Governance; (2) Social and Economic Equity; (3) Food Production; (4) Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution; (5) Health, Wellness, and Resilience; and (6) Food Waste. The recommendations are designed to enable community, government, and other partners to take collaborative and coordinated action on food system issues advancing food system transformation.

Governance

Social and Economic Equity

Food Production

Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution

Health, Wellness, and Resilience

Food Waste

Symbol Legend for Recommendations:

Y1 **Year 1**
Recommendations with this icon are priority actions to be progressed during year one of plan implementation.

IP **In Progress**
Recommendations with this icon are underway. Action is being taken by the HFPA, or community partners.

Governance

ensuring an enabling environment for effective action

Food governance includes (1) the formal and informal customs, practices, and assumptions that determine how we make decisions about our food system (e.g., intergovernmental partnerships or food policy councils) and (2) the outputs or products of these decision-making practices (e.g., policies, laws, and regulations). The ways we work together to design our cities, develop policies, and engage communities all impact our food system. Stronger connections between and among levels and orders of government (federal, provincial, local, and Indigenous), the agri-food sector, institutions, and community organizations as well as the active engagement of individuals will focus and enhance our collective impact.

The recommendations in this section are designed to enable relationship building and adaptation over time as HRM defines its place in food system governance within Mi'kma'ki, Nova Scotia, and Canada. As such, these recommendations aim to facilitate collaboration across and among government systems, agencies, and departments; align policies and programs that impact the food system; establish knowledge-sharing mechanisms; and develop strategies to monitor our progress. These recommendations require the Municipality to act directly, support partners, and advocate for change.

Y1 1. **Establish and fund a Food Policy Council** to coordinate collective action for positive change; support regional food initiatives; provide advice to governments, institutions, and others, and guide and evaluate the implementation of the *JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan*.

a. Develop a governance structure that best supports the Council in delivering an effective mandate, including terms of reference and responsibilities, reporting structures, staffing, and other administrative needs.

b. Resource the Council through secure funding from government and other sources, in-kind support, and other contributions to ensure an adequate budget for the implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.

i. Develop a sustainable funding stream operated by the Council to provide financial support for community-based initiatives that address community food access and the health of the local food system.

c. Centre racial equity and increase community power in food governance and ensure that the Council reflects diverse perspectives and provides opportunities for communities to lead and influence food action and system change in our food system towards increased food justice and food sovereignty.

Y1 2. **Support the development of an Indigenous Food Governance Body and an African Nova Scotian Food Policy Council** that operate autonomously from but in collaboration with the Food Policy Council.

a. Support the development of an African Nova Scotian Food Sovereignty plan.

Partners at the Dalhousie Schulich School of Law have explored options for a **Food Policy Council** in their report (**Appendix 1**): **Governance Structures for the Regional Food System in HRM**. The report makes recommendations based on 7 criteria for collaborative food governance:

- Comprehensive Sectoral Representation
- Community Diversity and Inclusivity
- Equalization of Power
- External Relationships
- Public Participation and Transparency
- Opportunities for Adequate Resourcing
- Adaptive Capacity

IP **3. Continue creating an enabling municipal environment for good food.**

a. Facilitate collaboration across municipal departments and adopt a food system lens and equity-based approach for municipal decisions.

   i. Ensure appropriate allocation of municipal resources for the adoption of a food system lens and creation of tools to support this.

   ii. Consider new policies, practices, and infrastructure projects through the food system lens.

   iii. Use the food system lens to review and update existing municipal plans and policies to further the objectives of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.

b. Investigate and create municipal incentives that support increased access to healthy food and a more sustainable local food system under current authority while exploring opportunities for additional incentives as changes are being considered to relevant legislation.

c. Continue to review and amend regional-planning documents and other long-range plans based on emergent food system issues and opportunities.

   i. Include progress measurement of policies aiming to increase access to food and strengthen the local food system in future regional-planning documents and other long-range plan reviews.

IP **4. Continue to advocate for collaboration across municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government and with Indigenous nations** to advance conversations and actions that build a resilient and equitable regional food system where healthy food is accessible for all.

a. Engage, support, and share learnings with other Nova Scotia municipalities to establish a more just, sustainable, and equitable food system.

b. Seek to align with the forthcoming *Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy*.

Y1 **5. Create a virtual community food hub through the JustFOOD website**.

a. Establish a central repository of resources that supports community food planning, provides local context on community food security, and promotes dignified food access.

b. Share and promote community food services (e.g., food banks), including those that are open beyond traditional working hours.

c. Share events, workshops, and trainings related to food in the region through a public calendar that allows community members to input their own events.

IP 6. **Develop Food4ALL, an interactive mapping resource** to enable the identification, refinement, and sharing of information about regional food resources, including agricultural land, food outlets, licensed community kitchens, food services, and food advocates.

   a. Build on existing data to create a comprehensive, current database of regional food resources.

7. **Develop a multi-sectoral online food-research hub** to enhance the availability and exchange of data related to urban food systems, including data collected by academics and institutions as well as data generated by civil society and other partners.

   a. Commit to hosting or facilitating a regular food system forum to share knowledge on creating a more resilient and equitable regional food system.

IP 8. **Pursue membership in the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP)** and other formal food networks to share knowledge and improve food governance.

Y1 9. **Implement and monitor the *JustFOOD Action Plan* in collaboration with universities and other research institutions.**

   a. Publish an annual review of a selection of recommendation indicators.

   b. Provide regular updates on implementation progress, including an annual update to Halifax Regional Council and a comprehensive five-year review, responding to emerging issues and adjusting actions as needed.

   c. Use the virtual food hub to share Plan progress, identify emerging issues, and adapt recommendations based on research and ongoing discussion.

   d. Use the key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate Plan progress.

Social and Economic Equity

Food access is directly related to income, the affordability of food, the accessibility and type of local food outlets, access to resources to produce food, and the availability of a sustainably produced food supply. Food justice treats food as a human right and seeks to ensure that the benefits and risks of our food system are shared equitably among us all.

These recommendations aim to increase community-level food sovereignty, recognizing that meaningful change requires that we shift away from charitable models in favour of those that build community capacity and reduce our reliance on a **globalized**, **industrialized**, and **corporatized** food system. We must ensure that everyone is able to produce, prepare, and access food safely and with dignity by equipping communities with food system knowledge, skills, and expertise; developing food policies and programs that address and improve social inclusion; and tackling the roots of food insecurity and injustice. Food work that directly addresses racial inequities, systems of oppression and privilege, and the distribution of resources and power contributes to stronger programming and more just outcomes for all.

A **globalized food system** is a food system that relies on global supply chains to meet the basic food-related needs of residents, producers, and food system workers.

An **industrialized food system** is a food system characterized by the mass production of standardized food items, driven by motives of profit and efficiency, often at the cost of human health, the environment, and social justice.

A **corporatized food system** is a food system in which a relatively small number of large companies have come to wield an inordinate amount of power and exert influence over food activities from farm to fork. In corporatized food systems, corporations are able to shape markets, technology and innovation agendas, food policy, and food governance frameworks.

10. **Promote income-based solutions.** Income is the key determinant of household food insecurity, and income-based solutions are required to address the root causes of food insecurity.

    a. Work across sectors and governments to promote a guaranteed basic income, living wages, income assistance reform, and strong social policies that allow all people to have adequate, liveable incomes and cope with rising costs of living, including the cost of food. Critical provincial policy levers include:

        i. Increasing the minimum wage to a living wage to enable low-income individuals to cope with the increasing costs of living, including food.

        ii. Increasing the income assistance rate to match the official poverty line or Market Basket Measure.

        iii. Increasing provincial child-benefit programs.

        iv. Incorporating indexation into provincial social assistance and other provincial income supports to account for inflation.

Photo: Ben Lemphers

11. **Develop programs and resources that address the rising cost of food** in collaboration with the Province, academic institutions, and other partners.

    a. Support a low-barrier emergency food benefit, distributed through trusted community partners, that will allow households facing urgent food scarcity to access foods of their choice in a dignified manner.

    b. Develop programs and resources (e.g., bulk delivery services) to assist community members in coping with the rising cost of food.

    c. Explore ways to reduce the cost and enhance availability of sustainably produced local food.

12. **Promote fair and decent employment for all**, including fair economic relations, fair wages, and improved labour conditions within the food and agriculture sector.*

    a. Advocate at the provincial level for (1) 10 paid sick days for all workers; (2) guaranteed holiday and overtime pay for all farm workers; and (3) immediate access to provincial health insurance upon arrival to Nova Scotia, regardless of the length of the work permit, for all workers in the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program.

    b. Advocate at the provincial and federal levels to establish new and ease existing pathways for migrant workers in the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program and Temporary Foreign Worker Program to achieve permanent residency.

    c. Collaborate with No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, Farm Safety Nova Scotia, the Province, and community organizations to improve occupational work and safety conditions for migrant workers in agriculture.

        i. Collaborate with No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Health to deliver workshops on occupational work and safety hazards (e.g., heat stroke and lyme disease).

        ii. Develop a funding stream to provide migrant workers with access to appropriate work gear (e.g., work shirts, hats, sunglasses, and water bottles).

        iii. Work with community partners to create and provide mental health resources to migrant workers.

*** Recommendations relevant to migrant workers were developed in collaboration with No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia and are based on public engagement and consultation with migrant agricultural workers in Nova Scotia.**

On July 15, 2022, members of No One Is Illegal – Nova Scotia deliver emergency food boxes to Caribbean and Latin American migrant workers in the Annapolis Valley.

Photo: Stacey Gomez

    d. Collaborate with community organizations to increase farm workers' access to good and culturally preferred food.

        i. Work with partners to provide farm workers with regular, scheduled access to fresh, low-cost, culturally preferred food either at farms or in central shopping areas.

        ii. Explore avenues to provide farm workers with opportunities and resources to grow food at home or in community spaces.

        iii. Pursue opportunities to fund the No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia Food-Box Program.

e. Collaborate with libraries, schools, community centres, and faith based-organizations to provide easily accessible social services (e.g., literacy services, legal services, resource fairs) to migrant workers in agriculture.

   i. Develop multiple-language information packages to share with workers upon their arrival in Nova Scotia that detail existing public services and how to access them.

f. Collaborate with community centres and faith-based organizations to organize leisure activities (e.g., regional sports tournaments) or outings for migrant workers in agriculture.

   i. Provide migrant workers with low-cost or free access to municipal recreational centres.

g. Collaborate with the Municipality, the Province, and community organizations to develop relief supports (e.g., an emergency-subsidy funding stream) for farm workers in crisis.

h. Work with the Municipality, the Province, and other relevant actors to increase farm workers' ability to travel freely via public transit and active transportation.

   i. Advocate for a reduced-cost or subsidized travel program through **Rural Transportation Association: Rural Rides**.

13. **Foster food-related social enterprises** that support sustainable livelihoods for equity-seeking populations and facilitate access to safe and healthy food in both urban and rural areas.

Photo: Stacey Gomez

Migrant workers and Nova Scotians gathered for a community brunch in Kentville. The event was a collaboration between the Valley Community Learning Association, the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth Immigrant Services, the Town of Kentville, and No One Is Illegal – Nova Scotia.

14. **Support community-based programs and grassroots initiatives** that provide dignified access to good food, create social inclusion, and offer choices that respect the culture and traditions of diverse communities.

    a. Increase ongoing support to the Halifax **Mobile Food Market** and other food-delivery programs to expand their reach and bring affordable, quality food to communities with limited access to healthy and culturally preferred food.

    b. Support groups to establish community food pantries and fridges where all members of the community can take and donate food with dignity.

    c. Pilot a **social supermarket** in collaboration with the Province and/or other partners.

Social supermarkets can take a variety of forms. Some are membership-based food retail outlets targeted to lower income households, where members can shop for affordable, healthier food and household items. Other models are not membership based but operate on a pay-what-you-can basis.

Photo: Emily Stevens

The **Mobile Food Market** brings healthy, affordable, high quality foods to Halifax neighbourhoods with limited access. Markets operate year-round and take place every two weeks.

d. Support the development of new community food centres, like The North Grove in Dartmouth, as places that build community through the sharing of food and knowledge.

e. Support the development and renewal of new and existing community kitchens.

   i. Inventory existing community kitchens and the stipulations for their use; analyze current opportunities and challenges facing community kitchens.

   ii. Encourage installation of community kitchens or retrofit existing kitchens in new developments, social housing sites, and municipal facilities.

The North Grove is a community hub where people come together to grow, cook, share and advocate for good food and a healthy and fair food system.

Photo: Snickerdoodle Photography

IP **15. Promote participatory education, training and research** as key elements in strengthening local action to promote rights-based approaches to food security and to increase social and economic equity.

a. Support municipal facilities such as the Halifax Public Libraries as well as other community service providers to offer food literacy programming.

b. Work with existing seniors clubs and centers to create opportunities for knowledge sharing, through storytelling and oral history, as a way to foster intergenerational and multicultural learning around food production, preparation, storage, and preservation.

c. Create opportunities for youth, including post-secondary students, to gain knowledge of food and build healthy relationship with foods.

d. Work with post-secondary institutions to provide food programming to students or to support organizations who provide such programming in a post-secondary education setting.

The Halifax Public Libraries know that food brings people together, and so do free and welcoming public spaces like our libraries. Resources come in all shapes, sizes—and yes, even tastes. The **Halifax Public Libraries** are proud to offer free snacks, workshops, resources, and tools for local food lovers and changemakers, year-round.

16. Improve the geographic and physical accessibility of food.

a. When reviewing and revising municipal planning documents, create incentives to increase community-level access to good food and strengthen the local food system.

   i. Require larger multi-unit and mixed-use buildings to provide space for food production as part of amenity spaces, and require a portion of the landscaping to be edible.

   ii. Create an application checklist for development applicants. This checklist should detail ways for developers to incorporate food-related supports (e.g., growing space) into new multi-unit buildings.

   iii. Require large land holdings and master-planning applications to address impacts on the food system and access to food as part of land suitability assessments and neighbourhood design.

   iv. Support policy-makers and community partners in using the **Community Food Assessment Toolkit** to increase the accessibility of food when working on larger-scale community visioning, developments, and municipal infrastructure projects.

   v. Increase opportunities for food uses (production, processing, on-land fish farms, and food retail such as farm-gate sales) and consideration of the impact on the food system in significant land-use bylaw and municipal-planning strategy updates.

b. Advocate for the elimination of restrictive covenants that restrict food uses through long-term conditions placed on a property's deed at the time of sale.

   i. Support legislation such as the **Provincial Bill No 55** to amend Chapter 385 of the Revised Statutes of 1989 The Real Property Act to prevent the creation of new and void existing restrictive covenants that restrict access to food and medicine.

c. Use transportation planning to help improve food accessibility in underserved communities by improving transit services and active transportation routes to important food destinations.

   i. Evaluate food-resource mapping (supermarkets, farmers' markets, and other food outlets) with transit and active transportation data to identify barriers to and opportunities for accessing food resources.

   ii. Work with transit planners to better support the geographic accessibility of food.

   iii. Explore central food-pick-up models for satellite communities, made accessible by regular shuttles to and from central pick-up sites.

Y1 **17. Use municipal facilities and assets to offer food programs, grow food, showcase best practices, and support publicly accessible food infrastructure.** This includes initiatives like community fridges, pantries, and kitchens.

18. Partner with post-secondary institutions to improve food access, choice, and affordability for students, recognizing the high rate of food insecurity among post-secondary students.

a. Work with partners to increase the transparency of exclusive contracts between universities and food-service companies.

b. Work with partners to decentralize food services on campus and allow small food businesses to operate on campus.

c. Examine the barriers to food access on campus and support programs that advance student food security.

i. Work with partners to provide shared equipment on campus in order to facilitate students storing and heating their food.

ii. Provide sustainable support to on-campus food-security initiatives and programs that increase student food access, such as student-run farmers' markets and community kitchens.

iii. Work with partners to increase community kitchen or kitchenette access to students who live in residence buildings that do not have cooking spaces or utilities.

iv. Support programs that encourage and enable youth to foster healthy relationships with food.

19. Support the design and implementation of inclusive social protection and food assistance programs for seniors. Ensure complementarity across wider social-protection programs and links with nutrition and health services**.**

a. Raise awareness among seniors and their families about existing food security and nutrition programs and services.

The **Loaded Ladle** provides accessible, sustainable, locally-sourced free food on the Dalhousie University campus. They also offer community programs that critically examine barriers to food sovereignty, food security, and food justice.

20. **Promote food security in the disability community**,* recognizing that persons with disabilities experience disproportionate barriers to accessing nutritious food and participating in food production.

    a. Advocate for reform to the provincial Disability Support Program with special attention to increasing the number of hours allocated to personal support workers, giving workers adequate time to prepare and cook nutritious meals for clients.

    b. Work with lived-experience advisors to develop and adopt standards to increase the accessibility of existing and proposed municipal food services and programs, including that of farmers' markets and urban farms located on municipal property.

    c. Design and implement inclusive social-protection and food-assistance programs for community members with disabilities, and ensure complementarity across wider social-protection programs and links with nutrition and health services.

        i. Raise awareness among persons with disabilities and their families about existing food-security and nutrition programs and services as well as eligibility criteria.

    d. Support the development of strategies for food distribution and delivery to persons with limited mobility.

        i. Secure funding for the development of a free or subsidized food-preparation and delivery program for residents with mobility barriers or health concerns (e.g., seniors, persons with disabilities, persons with autoimmune conditions).

    e. Promote the role of persons with disabilities in sustainable food production.

        i. Develop programs and funding streams to empower persons with disabilities to engage in agriculture, enabling access to resources such as land, advisory services, and food-production technologies.

    f. Carry out awareness-raising and training among governments, organizations, and institutions to ensure access to food and nutrition for persons with disabilities in partnership with organizations such as reachAbility and Inclusion Nova Scotia.

        i. Develop training programs to address the requirements of persons with disabilities concerning food and nutrition directed to (1) policy-makers, (2) the staff and volunteers of food-assistance and -distribution (or related) programs, (3) the private sector working in the food system and industry, (4) health-care professionals, including nutrition workers, (5) and those working in institutions such as schools, prisons, and residential institutions.

*** A Disability Community Advisory Group was organized to draft this set of recommendations in collaboration with the HRM and the HFPA. These recommendations are also informed by public engagement with members of the disability community as well as targeted engagement supported by reachAbility. Advisors and community members were compensated for their time and knowledge.**

21. Celebrate food's role in bringing people together and bridging cultures and experiences.

a. Develop a food-event program that reduces barriers, celebrates, supports, and promotes food-focused community events.

   i. Work with HRM Civic Events and licensing bodies to explore avenues to reduce costs and regulatory barriers associated with hosting food-focused community events.

b. Expand the number of events celebrating local producers.

c. Support programming opportunities for newcomers to share knowledge and skills with other newcomers and long-time residents alike.

d. Support Halifax Public Libraries and other municipal facilities in offering culturally diverse food programming.

e. Work with the Province and other partners to celebrate where our food comes from by promoting farm literacy and facilitating conversations between farmers and the public.

Indigenous Food Justice and Sovereignty

Indigenous food sovereignty enables and supports Indigenous Peoples in their right to (1) access healthy and culturally preferred foods and (2) exercise autonomy over where and how their food is produced, harvested, hunted, and fished. Indigenous food sovereignty necessitates the right to self-determination of Indigenous food systems, including the ability to access traditional food as well as to operate sustainably apart from or outside of an industrialized food system.

Canada's history of colonialism and marginalization of Indigenous Peoples includes the use of food as a tool of oppression, the destruction of traditional food systems, and the creation of policies that limit Indigenous people's ability to hunt, fish, grow, and gather. Indigenous food justice works to address these social and environmental injustices, providing a restorative framework to strengthen Indigenous food systems. Through Indigenous food justice, food can be a catalyst for healing, reconciliation, and cultural resurgence.

An Indigenous Advisory Group was organized to draft this set of recommendations in collaboration with HRM and the HFPA. These recommendations are also informed by engagement with Indigenous community members, supported by the Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre. Advisors and community members were compensated for their time and knowledge.

Photo by Chenise Hache/ Reclaiming Our Roots

James Doucette shows Zion how to make a grass whistle in Eastern Passage, NS.

Three Mi'kmaw values inform this section:

Etuaptmumk, or Two-Eyed Seeing, is a guiding principle developed by Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall in 2004. Etuaptmumk describes learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledge and ways of knowing, and the process of learning to use both these eyes together for the benefit of all.

Msit No'kmaq, or All My Relations, is a Mi'kmaw value that describes how we recognize and respect all of our human and non-human relations. Msit no'kmaq embodies a kinship approach in relationship building and community development, fostering trust and authenticity in every learning experience.

Netukulimk is the commitment to harvest only what we need, give back what we can, and pass our traditions on to future generations.

> "The recovery of the people is tied to the recovery of food, since food itself is medicine: not only for the body, but for the soul, for the spiritual connection to history, ancestors, and the land."
>
> Winona LaDuke, *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming* (2005)

Y1 **22. Establish and fund an Indigenous food-governance model**, promoting the right to self-governance and sovereignty, recognizing the right of Indigenous communities to define their own food systems.

a. Establish an Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Justice Working Group.

b. Ensure Indigenous representation on the Regional Food Policy Council (or alternative governance model) and on Working Groups.

c. Use Etuaptmumk (two-eyed seeing) as a guiding principle for ongoing Indigenous governance work and prioritize msit no'kmaq (all my relations) as a core tenant of this work.

Photo by Chenise Hache/ Reclaiming Our Roots

23. Support Indigenous partners to provide traditional knowledge sharing and food-skills training. This will enable greater food sovereignty for Indigenous people, recognizing that access to culturally preferred food improves community health outcomes. Embed netukulimk as a core tenet of this work, ensuring a commitment to sustainability, reciprocity, and community stewardship.

a. Support Indigenous community partners, such as Reclaiming Our Roots, in hosting food-based workshops and in offering Indigenous cooking classes both online and in person, with the goal of supporting Indigenous community members' autonomy to cook traditional and culturally rooted foods.

b. Promote community awareness and cultural knowledge of food and plants as medicine.

c. Support HRM community farms and gardens in growing and harvesting sweetgrass and other traditional Mi'kmaw medicines.

d. Provide opportunities for youth to have reliable and safe access to the land to shift how young people engage with traditional foods and the land itself.

e. Fund a full-time food-security coordinator staff position at the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC).

Alex harvests an eel using traditional methods at Williams Point, Nova Scotia.

24. **Deliver a range of programs to support dignified access to traditional food and groceries.** Programs are also needed to ensure there is equipment to store and prepare culturally rooted food.

    a. Expand grocery card support through MNFC for Indigenous community members in need.

    b. Establish a ride share group to support rural and urban community members to physically access grocery outlets and food retailers.

    c. Develop an inventory of food-programming resources and services accessible to and/or developed for Indigenous community members.

        i. Raise awareness of these resources and services in collaboration with community partners.

    d. Work with local organizations and pursue funding streams through which Indigenous organizations and community members can purchase or install processing and storage infrastructure such as walk-in fridges, deep freezes, cold-storage units, root cellars, and butchering tools.

        i. Fund the installation of a community freezer and pantry at the MNFC, where community members can access traditional foods supplied by Indigenous or settler hunters, ensuring that:

            1. Indigenous hunters' expenses are covered

            2. Food is hunted or procured sustainably

            3. Food is not taken away from reserve communities that face great food insecurity themselves

        ii. Implement a program to provide Indigenous community members with deep freezers and slow cookers. These tools promote dignity, self-sufficiency, and support access to food.

    e. Support Reclaiming Our Roots in offering an Indigenous food-box program to provide Indigenous community members with traditional ingredients supplemented with local food. Boxes would include educational materials about the food and guidelines for preparing it.

25. **Develop community infrastructure and projects that promote economic and social benefit in Indigenous communities**.

    a. Create workshops and navigational tools to facilitate Indigenous community access to licensing services, permits, commercially certified kitchens, and food-handling certification resources.

    b. Create and designate spaces for Indigenous community members to sell food and value-added products building community capacity and resilience.

    c. Create a public inventory of Indigenous food resources, businesses, farmers, and growers.

African Nova Scotian Food Justice and Sovereignty

African Nova Scotians are a distinct people with a rich history of prosperity and resilience. They descend from free and enslaved Black Planters, Black Loyalists, Black Refugees, Maroons, and other Black people who inhabited the original 52 land-based Black communities in Mi'kma'ki, Nova Scotia.[29]

However, due to historic and present-day systemic racism and colonialism, African Nova Scotians are faced with inequities in power, resources, and opportunities. Systemic racism causes chronic stress and trauma, resulting in poorer physical and mental health, and creates barriers such as an inability to access educational opportunities, find and keep employment, access health-care services, and find safe housing. Racial inequity is also ingrained in our food system, as demonstrated by the underrepresentation of Black Canadians in our agriculture sectors, lack of Black Canadians in leadership roles within agriculture organizations, and the overrepresentation of Black people in laborious and precarious roles related to agriculture.

Black food sovereignty recognizes these inequities and embraces "the right of Black people to healthy and culturally-appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. It includes their right to define their own food and agriculture systems and to build their own institutions to advance community capacity and resilience for access to food." [30]

These recommendations are designed to address Nova Scotia's legacy of systemic anti-Black racism and dispossession, celebrate the unique and vibrant food culture of the African Nova Scotian community, support strong traditions of homesteading and agriculture, and advance African Nova Scotian and Black food sovereignty.

An African Nova Scotian advisory group was organized to draft these recommendations in collaboration with HRM and the HFPA. These recommendations are also informed by engagement with ANS and Black community members as well as engagement with AKOMA and the Association of Black Social Workers. Advisors and community members were compensated for their time and knowledge.

> "Our ancestors have always resisted ownership over our bodies. From the moment we landed in North America, we have found ways to resist. Food was one of these ways. When we carried nothing else, we carried seeds, plaited in our hair, across the Middle Passage to this place. Our food is our sustenance, our freedom, and our culture. Black food sovereignty is a way to express ourselves and continue the legacy of resistance. It is a way to center our health, take back our freedom and regain our agency. Institutionalized systematic racism continues to deny us access to opportunities and resources and Black food sovereignty a vehicle to reclaiming what is inherently ours."
>
> -Wendie Wilson

26. **Build African Nova Scotian food system governance and ANS-centred policy.** This promotes the right to self-governance and sovereignty recognizing the right of ANS communities to define their own food systems.

   a. Establish an African Nova Scotian Food Sovereignty Working Group to:

      i. Develop an African Nova Scotian food sovereignty plan.

      ii. Establish and fund an autonomous African Nova Scotian Food Policy Council (or alternative governance body).

   b. Ensure ANS representation on the proposed Food Policy Council and on Working Groups.

   c. Embed the **Nguzo Saba, the seven principles of Kwanzaa** as structural elements of ongoing ANS governance.

Umoja (*Unity*): To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.

Kujichagulia (*Self-Determination*): To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves.

Ujima (*Collective Work and Responsibility*): To build and maintain our community together and make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and to solve them together.

Ujamaa (*Cooperative Economics*): To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together.

Nia (*Purpose*): To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

Kuumba (*Creativity*): To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

Imani (*Faith*): To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

27. **Provide access to growing space** by using public land to advance a reparative economy approach to supporting ANS community resilience, learning, and healing through urban and rural agriculture initiatives.

    a. Support the development of ANS-led community gardens and farms where community members can grow, harvest, and process food, building community food literacy.

    b. Support the development of ANS-led land link programs, wherein both established ANS farmers and new entrants are supported in accessing land.

        i. Use municipal land and spaces to support this work.

    c. Support organizations in promoting agriculture awareness and providing agriculture training and education opportunities in the ANS community.

Rielle Williams, Program Manager at the Black Cultural Centre in Cherry Brook with produce grown in the Centre's garden.

28. **Support community capacity building for ANS-led, ANS-serving food projects, and programs to respond to community food insecurity.** These initiatives will provide access to stable and sustainable funding while growing capacity to lead food system transformation through community learning.

    a. Support ANS community partners in hosting traditional food-workshops and programs.

    b. Create spaces where ANS youth feel comfortable and have opportunities to participate in intergenerational food learning with Afro-centric food literacy led by elders.

29. **Develop community infrastructure and projects that create economic and social benefits in ANS communities**.

    a. Create workshops and navigational tools to facilitate ANS community access to licensing services, permits, commercially certified kitchens, and food-handling certification resources.

    b. Support the development of an ANS-led community food hub that will centralize the storage, processing, marketing, and distribution of ANS-produced food and value-added products.

        i. Support the development of an ANS food co-op.

    c. Create and designate spaces for ANS community members to sell food and value-added products building community capacity and resilience.

        i. Create trade and barter opportunities and networks.

    d. Support the development of ANS-owned and -operated groceries, food retailers, and food-based social enterprises.

    e. Create a public inventory of ANS food resources, businesses, homesteads, farmers, and growers.

    f. Create platforms and apps where ANS community members can promote community meals and events.

Ziel Jones, Assistant Farm Coordinator at AKOMA's Hydroponic Garden

30. **Support the delivery of culturally rooted community health and knowledge programs.** These must be informed by the distinct experiences, culture, and needs of the ANS community.

   a. Provide opportunities and spaces for knowledge sharing through storytelling and oral history, to foster intergenerational and multicultural learnings around food production, preparation, storage, and preservation in the ANS community.

   b. Support ANS community partners in developing and delivering services to improve community health outcomes.

   c. Promote community awareness and cultural knowledge of food as medicine and medicinal plants.

Community volunteers at the Black Cultural Centre.

Food Production

Local food production strengthens the social and economic well-being of our communities, protects and preserves the environment, and builds resilience to global supply challenges and price fluctuations. These recommendations aim to support producer livelihoods and strengthen sustainable food production by providing resources and services to urban and rural food producers; developing the infrastructure needed to support a local food system; enabling secure access to land for sustainable food production; and otherwise supporting short food chains.

31. Expand the Municipality's role in local food production.

a. Dedicate a portion of municipal parkland to edible landscaping where residents are encouraged to harvest the produce. This will be informed by research and consultation.

   i. Plant demonstration plots on municipal property in high pedestrian-traffic areas to encourage harvesting and showcase sustainable urban agriculture.

b. Increase the planting of food-bearing trees when planting new trees in parks and on other civic lands, and encourage community stewardship of these community orchards through partnerships with local gleaning organizations.

c. Develop a seed bank and seed-sharing program in partnership with Halifax Public Libraries.

Y1 **32. Support and expand community gardens and urban farms** as important sites of urban food production and social inclusion, and acknowledge community-garden access as an issue of social and economic equity.

a. Update, expand and increase funding for the HRM Community Garden Program so that the Municipality can (1) make it easier for community members to access gardening space through community plots and (2) increase its support for existing community gardens.

   i. Enable and fund the development of a community plots program where the Municipality collaborates with interested communities to develop new plots. HRM will be responsible for developing, resourcing, and maintaining garden plots that community members can access directly through the municipality.

   ii. Create and fund a community garden and municipal food-production staff position. This HRM staff member will provide Community Developers with administrative support to build community capacity and operate community gardens. This staff member will also support community members in sourcing land and resources (e.g., wood, soil, fertilizer, seedlings) and will serve as a resource on urban agriculture best practices.

   iii. Build, promote, and regularly update the inventory of municipal land suitable for gardening; showcase HRM community gardens and plots data using the Food4All map and other resources that promote the availability of garden space.

   iv. Regularly review the HRM Community Garden Program and the proposed community plots program to ensure relevance and functionality.

   v. Explore subsidizing Halifax Water connection fees and other opportunities for stable water sources to support the gardens and plots.

   vi. Secure a funding stream to support community gardens in conducting accessibility audits and implementing onsite changes to improve garden accessibility.

   vii. Promote and explore expansion of the Urban Orchard Program that may provide free fruit trees to gardens on municipal land.

   viii. Designate urban agriculture and community garden spaces as a community-benefit category for community-benefit agreements.

b. Increase opportunities for urban agriculture and community gardens in new parks, infrastructure projects, and large municipal projects.

   i. Increase feasibility of community gardens and urban agriculture when renewing existing parks or creating new ones. This includes installing water connections, creating garden plots or raised beds, and adding other onsite supports.

c. Work with community partners to develop new and support existing accessible demonstration farms that produce food for the surrounding community and offer technical training and mentorship in urban farming.

IP **33. Protect and enable secure access and tenure to land for sustainable food production.** This includes land for community gardeners and small producers.

a. Develop land-use inventories of public lands, including parks, boulevards, right-of-ways, and rooftops that could be used for urban agriculture.

b. Explore measures to preserve existing and expand agricultural land used for food production within HRM.

c. Advocate for stronger tools to protect agricultural land across the province.

   i. Advocate for a comprehensive land-use strategy that will include (1) an agricultural land bank, (2) 0% taxation on land owned by a registered farm or land actively maintained as farmland by a registered farmer, (3) access to Crown land for agriculture use, and (4) support for those who bring land into agriculture production.

d. Work with partner organizations to develop a backyard-sharing program.

e. Investigate the benefit of municipal property tax incentives and grants-in-lieu-of-tax programs for landowners and municipalities using land for retail food production, such as market gardens and land sharing.

34. **Increase the resilience of the local food system** by supporting sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices, climate change adaptation, and other ecosystem services.

   a. Use the provincial climate-risk assessment to evaluate and protect agricultural land in HRM.

   b. Work to increase provincial support and funding for renewable energy systems on farms.

      i. Work with Efficiency Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture to create a guiding document that details the various types of energy-efficiency upgrades that are applicable to farming operations as well as the government programs that support the implementation of these upgrades.

   c. Partner with relevant organizations, such as the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, to demonstrate best practices for sustainable production and support the development of resources to encourage **regenerative agriculture practices**.

      i. Explore opportunities to promote cover cropping and other soil enhancement and protection measures to enhance and beautify vacant lots and off-season fields.

Regenerative agriculture is a systems-based approach to land stewardship and food production that seeks to rehabilitate ecosystems, with specific practices varying from grower to grower and from region to region. In general, regenerative agriculture can be described as the use of sustainable techniques to improve soil health, increase biodiversity, protect and improve the quality of watersheds, sequester carbon, increase the land's resilience to climate change, and strengthen the health and vitality of the land. Regenerative practices include conservation tillage, rotational grazing, cover cropping, intercropping, and more.

Although recognition and appreciation for regenerative agriculture are growing, it is important to appreciate that many peoples and cultures, Indigenous Peoples in particular, have farmed this way for millennia, and that not all who adopt these practices use this label.

35. **Support local food producers to build a multigenerational and economically viable food system**.

   a. Support organizations in promoting agriculture awareness and providing agriculture training and education opportunities (e.g., Farm and Workforce Development, Meet Your Farmer, and the Agricultural Technician Apprenticeship Program).

   b. Work with partners at the provincial level to develop farm-succession planning resources and programs through which young farmers can connect with retiring farms.

   c. Advocate for a provincially supported land-access program, such as one that matches farmers who are looking for land to rent or buy with land holders who are looking to lease or sell their property.

   d. Introduce young people to the industry through partnerships with organizations such as Nova Scotia Young Farmers and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture.

36. **Explore policies and programs that improve (waste) water management and reuse in agriculture and food production.**

Food Supply, Processing, and Distribution

Through policy development and investment in practical programs, local governments can support social, technological, and organizational innovation in supply, processing, and distribution to create a more sustainable and resilient food system. By supporting local food-processing and distribution options, municipalities can shorten food-supply chains and play a role in facilitating a **circular local economy**.[31] This support for locally-driven activity helps to ensure a sustainable, fair, reliable, and efficient supply and distribution of food into, out of, and within the municipality.

A circular economy can be described as an "economic model that aims to avoid waste and to preserve the value of resources (raw materials, energy and water) for as long as possible. Products and materials are continuously (re) circulated – as opposed to a linear model in which they are discarded as waste after use."

IP **37. Assess the flow of food to and through HRM.** Researching the accessibility of quality, affordable foods in communities with a higher risk of food-access issues is important to progressing this recommendation.

Y1 **38. Create an enabling municipal environment for the supply, processing, and distribution of local food.** This will require support for local food businesses, including farmers' markets, informal markets, retail and wholesale markets, restaurants, and other food distributors.

a. Develop policies (e.g., property tax exemptions) to expand processing, storage, and distribution of local food.

b. Support the development of a public market strategy and making HRM a **Market City**. Identify opportunities for multipurpose structures and other municipal infrastructure to be used for farmers' markets.

c. Explore incentives for local food businesses that produce, process, or supply local food.

d. Allow community food markets, food-distribution hubs, and stable community supported agriculture (CSA) distribution sites in municipal spaces such as community centres and libraries.

e. Review and update home-based business regulations to better enable small-scale food and urban agriculture businesses, where feasible.

f. Promote the development of local food businesses through municipally or provincially funded business supports, such as training, administrative supports, and guidance services.

g. Work with and promote organizations that offer microloans to aid in the establishment and operation of small, food-based businesses.

h. Work with neighbouring municipalities to plan for, encourage, and attract value-added food-processing businesses in HRM.

i. Expand the provision of nutritious and local food in municipally run and supported programs.

IP **39. Improve and expand infrastructure that links buyers to sellers.** This will build social cohesion and trust, support cultural exchange, and ensure sustainable livelihoods.

a. Continue to support the development of the Halifax Regional Food Hub and provincially supported community food networks, creating centralized infrastructure to store, process, market, and distribute local food to serve HRM.

i. Design transportation services and supports to help farmers get their products to the food hub.

ii. Pilot a local food co-op in collaboration with a local food hub that purchases food from local suppliers as well as other products such as bulk goods to provide access to affordable, good-quality foods.

iii. Establish farmer-processor partnerships whereby processors (such as restaurants or bakers) identify products they can predict demand for. Order these products from local farmers prior to planting season so that farmers can plan to meet this market demand.

iv. Design a match-making tool or service whereby food retailers with a demand for specific products are matched with producers who are able to supply those products).

40. **Advocate for public procurement and trade policies that facilitate local food procurement.** This will involve the Municipality, local institutions, and community organizations.

    a. Measure the percentage of local and sustainable food procured by the Municipality, and set goals to increase this to 20% over time.

    b. Advocate for strengthened local procurement policies for hospitals, schools, universities, and other major local institutions.

        i. Develop a municipal policy(ies) requiring provision of local food at public-engagement events.

41. **Support compliance of local businesses with provincial and federal food-safety regulations.** This will require supporting efforts to address regulatory barriers faced by food businesses.

42. **Promote local sustainable seafood production and consumption.**

    a. Through municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws, encourage on-land closed-containment fish farms, where appropriate, as a sustainable alternative to open net-pen fish farming.

    b. Work with the Province to advance the concept of an Atlantic Canadian sustainable seafood hub. Include a virtual marketplace that provides real-time information on products and landings.

        i. Use existing and new processing, cold-storage, transportation, and distribution infrastructure to aggregate and distribute seafood products.

Health, Wellness, and Resilience

Food insecurity is one of the social determinants of health. What we eat and our access to nutrition impacts our well-being. Household food insecurity is associated with poorer physical and mental health, premature mortality, increased hospital stays, and increased health care spending.

As food systems have become reliant on global, corporatized supply chains, traditional diets (typically rich in nutritious, plant-based foods) have become less accessible. This shift has resulted in the increased consumption of highly processed foods, high calorie foods, and animal products. The inaccessibility of nutritious foods has negative impacts on human health and is ecologically unsustainable. Nutritious diets and the regular consumption of fruits and vegetables benefits both our bodies and our planet.[32]

However, plentiful access to nutritious foods is reliant on the health and resilience of our food system. Climate change is a critical threat to our food system and negatively impacts both food security and the nutritional quality of our food. As such, food system vulnerabilities must be mapped and addressed, especially as the impacts of climate change are not borne equally. Black, and racialized communities face disproportionate risks that are rooted in a national legacy of settler colonialism, white supremacy, and systematic dispossession.

These recommendations therefore aim to strengthen ecological resilience, increasing our ability to respond to climate change. These recommendations further aim to promote and support access to nutritious food and create the conditions for healthy food environments.

IP **43. Address food insecurity's impact on community health** in partnership with Nova Scotia Health Public Health, the IWK Health Centre, the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, academic partners, and commercial food retailers.

a. Advocate for income-based solutions to effectively address the root cause of household food insecurity. (See recommendation 10, listed under Social and Economic Equity).

b. Explore the corporate determinants of health, addressing profit-driven increases in the cost of food and determining ways to hold industries accountable.

44. Develop or support programming that increases access to healthy food as a public health measure. This is especially important for food-insecure communities.

a. Explore the development of a program such as the FoodShare Food Rx program through which registered dietitians or healthcare practitioners can prescribe nutritious food boxes to community members experiencing chronic food insecurity.

b. Advocate for improved quality and availability of food in long-term-care facilities, ensuring that seniors and people with disabilities have access to sustainable nutritious diets.

c. Work with the **Dietitians Network of Nova Scotia** to increase awareness of existing free IWK and NSHA nutritional services provided to community members.

d. Collaborate with community and health partners to connect new and expectant parents experiencing household food insecurity with food resources.

Dietitian services offered through Nova Scotia Health and the IWK are covered by the Province of Nova Scotia. Numerous nutrition education and counselling services are offered in individual and group settings, however the referral processes vary and may require a doctor's note.

Dietitian services can be accessed through private practice/community dietitians without doctor's referrals. The fees for these services will vary depending on each dietitian. Individuals with medical insurance may have partial or full coverage.

IP **45. Develop an emergency food program.** This program will help coordinate efforts to increase the resilience of local food systems to climate change and food-supply shortages, particularly in those areas and communities most vulnerable to climate change impacts and breaks in the supply chain.

a. Evaluate the anticipated impacts of climate change events on HRM's food system, the current climate resilience of the food system, and HRM-specific methods of improving climate resilience and adaptive capacity.

b. Develop an emergency food plan with funding and resources for emergency responses. In this work, develop partnerships and options for the storage, transportation, and equitable distribution of food during crises.

i. Identify communities most vulnerable to food-access barriers in emergencies.

ii. Identify, describe, and commit essential infrastructure for the procurement, storage, preparation, and distribution of food supplies such as kitchen facilities with generators, food and refrigerated trucks, and community spaces that will be open during emergencies.

iii. Establish the roles, relationships, and expectations for emergency food-service providers to support the procurement, storage, preparation, and distribution of food. Formalize these relationships to ensure partners are prepared for their role in emergency response.

iv. Identify other supports required for emergency food-response measures (e.g., food stockpiles).

c. Integrate food security and emergency food planning in municipal and provincial emergency measures.

d. Dedicate staff resources to climate-related food work in both municipal government and the community.

46. Promote sustainable diets. Healthy, safe, culturally preferred, environmentally friendly, and equity-based diets can be promoted through relevant education, health promotion, and communication programs.

a. Share and promote information on sustainable diets through public education campaigns.

b. Raise awareness about dietary contributions to climate change and provide resources to help residents make climate-conscious food choices.

i. Create a guide to help consumers, institutions, and organizations select, access, and prepare sustainable local foods, including ocean-friendly seafood.

IP **47. Work with the Coalition for Healthy School Food and the Province to advocate for universal healthy school food programs and support school food partners on implementation.** These programs will provide food that is healthy, regionally sourced, seasonal, and sustainably produced, while also offering the flexibility for schools to tailor programs to meet their communities' unique needs and characteristics.

a. Ensure that programs offer culturally preferred food; are informed by and employ the knowledge and skills of parents in the community; and provide employment and job-training opportunities.

b. Support the Mobile Food Market in establishing sustainable relationships with schools to provide fresh vegetables and fruit.

c. Support the development and operation of meal-programming services for youth during summer months when schools are not in session.

48. Market and promote nutritious food options in municipal buildings and recreation settings.

a. Set nutritious food at a price point that is affordable for all and that is competitively priced against foods with lower nutritional value.

b. Prioritize nutritious food in municipal vending.

Photo: Nourish Nova Scotia

49. Explore regulatory and voluntary options to create healthy food environments.

a. Work with healthy built environment partners and researchers to map and analyze access to healthy food-retail through variation in the quality and quantity of food outlets in communities.

b. Investigate tax incentives and licensing and zoning policies that support access to healthy food at small-scale or independent grocery stores, especially in neighbourhoods with poor access to healthy food.

c. Develop municipal zoning by-laws and incentives to improve access to healthy food near schools and to restrict the location and number of fast-food outlets in new developments surrounding schools and community centres.

d. Test pilot programs that improve access to healthy food in neighbourhoods (e.g., healthy corner stores, pop-up grocery stores, or mobile greengrocers).

50. Advocate for universal access to safe drinking water.

a. Improve universal access to public drinking water in parks and HRM facilities.

   i. Explore municipal policies to ensure ready access to free drinking water in parks and other publicly accessible places.

   ii. Accelerate and increase municipal funding for the installation of drinking fountains in existing parks, advancing the 2020 HRM Parks Washrooms & Drinking Fountains Strategy Policy A-07.

b. Provide low-cost resources for residents to test their water quality at home, collaborating with Rural Water Watch when working with the rural communities in HRM that are not connected to city water. Promote these resources.

Food Waste

Food waste is food that is discarded or degraded for retail or consumer use. Food loss refers to food that is spoiled, discarded, or reduced in quality between production and distribution. It is estimated that, annually, each Canadian wastes an average of 79 kilograms of food, resulting in significant environmental, economic, and social consequences. Because food loss and waste occur along all stages of the supply chain and across all sectors of the food system, all levels of government, businesses, and communities need to collaborate to prevent and reduce food loss and waste.

These recommendations aim to support the sustainable management and reduction of food waste by adopting a circular economy approach, recovering and redistributing food, and raising awareness of food loss and waste across the food value chain.

51. **Convene food system actors to assess and monitor food loss and waste reduction across the food value chain.**

    a. In collaboration with partners such as the National Zero Waste Council, Divert Nova Scotia, Second Harvest, and Halifax Solid Waste Resources, identify gaps and develop better systems for the collection of food-waste data to (1) establish a baseline measure of food waste and (2) identify opportunities to address or prevent food waste.

    b. Participate in regional and national conversations on food waste and circular economy.

52. **Promote and build on existing initiatives to educate and raise public awareness around food loss, food waste, and the value of household or community-level composting** in collaboration with HRM Department of Solid Waste, Halifax Public Libraries, Divert Nova Scotia, and other partners.

    a. Develop and promote tools that support businesses to enable or improve donation, rescue, and redistribution practices, such as Second Harvest's **Risk Reduction Plan**.

    b. Promote public education campaigns to reduce the amount of packaging and non-biodegradable materials that end up in compost.

53. **Review and develop policies and regulations to promote recovery and redistribution of safe and nutritious foods using a food use-not-waste hierarchy**

    a. Explore the development of policies to require public events to adopt appropriate food-waste strategies, prioritizing prevention and donation.

54. **Promote recovery and redistribution of safe and nutritious foods**. The target is those foods at risk of being lost, discarded, or wasted from production, manufacturing, retail, catering, wholesale, and hospitality.

    a. Provide assistance to organizations, such as **FOUND Forgotten Food**, community fridges, and other local efforts that serve vulnerable populations, to acquire, process, and distribute surplus commodities and food that would otherwise be lost or destroyed.

    b. Develop or promote matchmaking tools that reduce food loss and increase the diversion of food waste by connecting supply and demand, such as the **Second Harvest Food Rescue App**.

    c. Evaluate opportunities to incentivize businesses and organizations to take tangible measures to reduce food waste.

55. **Align with and reflect the proposed Update to HRM's *Integrated Solid Waste Resource Management Strategy*.**[33]

    a. As part of the update to the Solid Waste Resource Management Strategy, staff plan on exploring circular economy principles and approaches, including collaborations that reduce food waste and promote new opportunities that keep food waste out of the solid waste system.

IP 56. Explore ways to promote household and community-level composting.

a. Pilot a community composting project in which neighbourhoods or communities are given small-scale composters to compost household waste in central locations such as schools and parks.

b. Explore a vermiculture pilot project to provide a limited number of low-cost worm composters to community members along with worms, bedding, and instructions.

   i. Provide mandatory training on vermiculture best practices and maintenance.

   ii. Partner with Halifax Public Libraries, community food centres, and municipal recreation centres to set up demonstration vermicompost bins.

c. Leverage the **Master Composter Recycler** program, established in 2019 by Solid Waste, to promote training and education around backyard composting.

Implementation

JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART A - FEBRUARY 2023

HALIFAX

HALIFAX FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

Implementation: Strategies for Success

Six strategies for success were developed through community engagement, creating a framework for implementation of recommendations made in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan.*

Work Together

We will work across sectors, learn from each other, and build on our strengths. We will prioritize and coordinate measurable goals and actions that focus and enhance our collective impact.

Respond to Changing Needs

While the guiding principles remain constant, the goals, strategies, and how we measure success will adapt to shifting needs and contexts and be regularly reviewed.

Measure Progress

Through the adoption of common goals and tools to measure success, we will work together to collect relevant data and assess progress on an on-going basis.

Engage Local Leadership

Local leadership and regional collaborative governance will link experience and influence across sectors and inform relevant action.

Be Bold

Working together toward a just food system requires creativity and imagination. This is an opportunity to test new ideas, innovate, and challenge the status quo.

Plan for Future Generations

Our work needs to be rooted in principles of Indigenous food sovereignty, environmental justice and social justice so that our actions nourish our land, water, and communities for generations to come.

Next Steps

Establish JustFOOD Working Groups

Following the public launch of Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, HRM and the HFPA will establish formal JustFOOD Working Groups. Working Groups will be responsible for developing the implementation strategies that will appear in Part B of the Plan.

JustFOOD Working Groups will bring together a range of community and government actors with both professional and lived experience. The working group model is a community-based, collective-impact approach to implement key recommendations, while building greater capacity for food system change in HRM. Working Group members will be compensated for their time and expertise; however, it is anticipated that some members' involvement may be covered by their employers.

Formalize Commitments and Develop Implementation Strategies

When Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* is released, JustFOOD Working Groups will begin to develop implementation strategies. Part B of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* will detail these implementation strategies and will include commitments to action on behalf of food system partners and key actors. A final Plan, comprising both Part A and Part B, will be brought to Halifax Regional Council for endorsement in 2023.

Form a Food Policy Council

Implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* will require cross-sector governance. HRM and the HFPA propose that a Food Policy Council be created to replace the HFPA as a collaborative governing body. The proposed Food Policy Council is anticipated to act as a legal entity that will be tasked with coordinating, guiding, and evaluating the implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, which will include oversight of the JustFOOD Working Groups. The Food Policy Council would function in consultation and collaboration with the proposed African Nova Scotian and Indigenous food councils or alternates.

A governance report that details considerations and provides a recommended model, entitled Governance Structures for the Regional Food System in HRM, has been prepared by partners at the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University (**see Appendix 1**).

Next Steps

Monitor Progress

Recommendations in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* are based on the six categories of the **Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP)**. By signing onto the MUFPP, HRM will be able to use an established monitoring framework to measure the impact of actions in the region and compare progress with other jurisdictions using the same benchmarks. The proposed Food Policy Council will track and review progress to ensure that (1) the council is operating effectively and adapting to the complex work of food system change and (2) the priority recommendations made in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* are progressing. Monitoring steps will include:

- Publish an annual review of a selection of *JustFOOD Action Plan* indicators
- Provide regular updates on implementation progress, including an annual update to city council and a comprehensive five-year review
- Report interim progress online at justfoodhalifax.ca
- Use the virtual food hub to share Plan progress, identify emerging issues, and adapt recommendations based on research and ongoing discussion
- Use community-based developmental evaluation tools for both external and internal evaluation to increase the positive impact of *JustFOOD Action Plan* on our food system while supporting citizen-driven change

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Appendices

Contents

Appendix 1. Building Collaboration: Governance in Halifax's Regional Food System

Appendix 2. Engagement Design and Results Report

Appendix 3. JustFOOD Action Plan Framework

Appendix 1. Building Collaboration: Governance in Halifax's Regional Food System

https://justfoodhalifax.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/justfoodgov_report_Oct2022-3.pdf

Governance Report Executive Summary:

In 2019, the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA) committed to co-creating the JustFOOD Action Plan. The Action Plan will be the first regional food strategy for the HRM, one focused on strengthening the regional food system and enhancing community food security. JustFOOD is organized around six principles that originate from the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. Those principles relate to: governance; social and economic equity; food production; food supply, processing, and distribution; health, wellness, and resilience; and food waste (JustFOOD 2022). One outcome contemplated by the Action Plan is the creation of a governance body to oversee the realization of these principles and to provide a forum for collaborative engagement around governance of the regional food system.

In Spring 2022, our research group was asked by the HFPA to study and offer recommendations on the appropriate structure for a JustFOOD governance body. We were asked to provide a reasonably fine-grained analysis of potential organizational structures and constitutive rules and policies to guide decision making under the Action Plan. To that end, we undertook an initial rapid literature scan to identify a set of key criteria that define "good" governance struc- tures in the food systems context. Seven key criteria emerged from that review, which we then brought to members of the HFPA Steering Committee for consultation about our research framework.

Using these seven criteria as a starting point, we then pursued a two-pronged approach. First, we conducted a further review of academic research on local-regional food systems governance to establish what lessons we could identify to help guide development of a governance struc- ture for the Action Plan. Second, we gathered publicly-available data on food policy council structures from around the country in the form of constitutive documents such as terms of reference and organizational bylaws. Using our seven key criteria, we coded these data to ex- tract and synthesize grounded recommendations for structuring a governance body in Halifax. These recommendations range over issues from the size of the body, to the composition of its membership, to its relationship with external stakeholders.

Finally, to contextualize the findings from both our literature review and the primary data, we reviewed relevant legislative frameworks in Nova Scotia and federally. This final step helped us to identify specific legal powers or barriers that might influence the appropriate form of governance in HRM along a continuum of "internal" to "external" structures.

This report presents the findings from our research, organized around the seven-criteria frame- work we established at the outset and refined over the course of our work.

Appendix 2: Engagement Design And Results

HRM Food Charter Engagements

HRM and the HFPA conducted extensive engagement on the *HRM Food Charter*, a declaration used as a stepping stone towards the development of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*. Engagement began in 2016 with a public, online survey. In October of 2017, HRM and the HFPA hosted two public engagement events at the Halifax Central Library as well as a question and answer "Lunch and Learn" with Municipal Councillors. The Halifax Central Library engagements included a panel discussion, group discussions, and a keynote address from world renowned food policy expert Wayne Roberts. In addition to these sessions, several targeted community conversations were held later in the year, including: (1) "Food in NS: Our Strengths and Challenges", presented by the Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Community Health Board; (2) a community level conversation hosted by Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia and the Loaded Ladle; and (3) "Chili and Charter Chatter," a community conversation and meal hosted by the Dartmouth North Community Food Centre. Engagement concluded with an HRM staff session on November 24th, 2017. In total, over 200 residents and 30 municipal staff and Councillors participated in the formal Charter-based engagements, with many more participating in community hosted conversations.

HRM and the HFPA worked closely with the Toronto Food Policy Council throughout this series of engagements to build the rationale, connect local efforts to international best practices, and generate excitement and buy-in for a *HRM Food Charter*. Regional Council endorsed the *HRM Food Charter* in December 2019 as part of the municipal commitment to work with the HFPA to develop a food strategy for the region, which became the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.

Building Awareness

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated the many gaps in our food system, making clear the extent of food insecurity across the region and the essential roles played by our food producers and food workers. In June of 2020, HRM responded by supporting the growing of food at home by distributing veggie seeds, garden packs, container gardens, and planting guides to more than 700 HRM households. These supports were distributed in partnership with Feed Nova Scotia and HRM's YouthLive, Halifax Public Libraries, Community Mobilization Teams, and Parks and Recreation. To support access to good food, 1100 food hampers were distributed through the Mobile Food Market. In 2021, local granola bars and colouring sets were added to approximately 300 Mobile Food Market hampers.

These outreach efforts also built awareness of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, introducing residents to the Plan and inviting them to take a survey or share a story about their food experiences during COVID-19. The survey received 260 responses. Results indicated that during the height of the pandemic, those reporting difficulty accessing food, or worrying about not having enough food, was 10% higher than in pre-pandemic times. A total of 57.6% of respondents reported facing additional challenges accessing food during COVID-19.

Food System Workshops

Engagement for Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region* began in the spring of 2021, with two Food System Workshops. These workshops were designed to convene food system actors and community members; raise public awareness of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*; generate feedback for Plan development, and build a foundation for further community engagement and action.

Workshop #1 was held virtually and was designed to test the JustFOOD Framework of principles and food system goals derived from the *HRM Food Charter*. Two sessions were offered in March of 2021. The workshops had a total of 59 attendees from across the food system. Based on feedback from Workshop #1, the Charter principles and food system goals were clarified and updated. The workshop also resulted in the identification of "strategies for success" to guide the development of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*. A **What We Heard Report** was made public, shared with workshop participants, and posted on the JustFOOD website.

Themes Identified in Workshop #1

ACTION AREAS	SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FRAMEWORK
Collaboration	Indigenous sovereignty
Governance & Policy	Better acknowledging climate change
Education & Awareness	More collaboration (collective impact)
Community Ownership & Control	Plain language goal definitions
Infrastructure	Defining food as a right
Funding	Treating food as an asset

Workshop #2 was held virtually and two sessions were offered in June of 2021. The workshops had a total of 78 registrants and 30 attendees. Workshop #2 sessions built on directions developed in Workshop #1, with the objective to identify action areas to advance through the development of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, and potential strategies for realizing these actions. Breakout groups were organized based on participants' responses in the registration survey to the question What do you want the *JustFOOD Action Plan to achieve?*

A **What We Heard Report** capturing themes from Workshop #2 was shared with workshop participants and supporters on July 20th. Five Action Areas emerged from Workshop #2:

WORKSHOP #2 ACTION AREAS
Coordinate Collective Action
Expand Community Food Infrastructure
Establish School Food Programs
Increase Food System Resilience
Reflect Community Strengths and Values, including Indigenous perspectives such as Netukulimk and Etuaptmumk.

JustFOOD Website Launch and Social Media

Following the workshops, HRM and the HFPA collaborated with a designer to develop the Plan website, **justfoodhalifax.ca**, which launched October 15, 2021. The website is the online home of the Plan and hosts the JustFOOD Action Survey and Engagement Toolkit. The website will also serve as a virtual hub for community food resources and local food research. In addition, HRM's **Shape Your City Food Action** project page was used to profile Plan development, host the engagement surveys, and direct visitors to the JustFOOD website.

HRM and the HFPA worked with community partners and HRM planning staff to expand social media outreach. Social media was primarily used to promote engagement opportunities, such as the JustFOOD Action Survey, but also served to celebrate others working to improve our food system. JustFOOD sends email updates to a continually growing list of subscribers, currently at 695 people, providing news on Plan progress and engagement opportunities. JustFOOD also has a growing amount of followers on several social media platforms:

- Facebook - 953 followers
- Instagram - 505 followers
- Twitter - 818 followers

JustFOOD Engagement Toolkit

The **JustFOOD Engagement Toolkit** was created to support community members and groups in hosting their own conversations about the food system and identify actions to shape the *JustFOOD Action Plan*. Common Roots, Vieth House, and The North Grove used the toolkit to guide their sessions and the toolkit is shared on the JustFOOD website as resource for ongoing food action conversations.

Civic Dinner Kits

In the fall of 2021, HRM and the HFPA distributed 500 Civic Dinner Kits with the help of community partners, including the Halifax Public Libraries, Family Resource Centres, HRM Community Mobilization Teams, Hope Blooms, AKOMA, and the Association of Black Social Workers. Each Civic Dinner contained ingredients to make a pot of soup and a batch of granola bars for 6 to 8 people. Kits included a discussion guide to prompt conversations about food justice and how we can effect positive change within the HRM food system. Dinner hosts had several options for sharing back what they heard in their discussion. This data was entered into the online survey tool and incorporated into the draft recommendations.

As COVID-19 public health restrictions changed, community partners adapted how they used the kits. Some groups used the kits to host a meal and conversation with their community, or prepared them as takeaway meals. Other kits were distributed alongside existing produce pack programs and markets. Others were enhanced with additional ingredients and used for virtual cooking parties, led by local chefs.

Photo: Maddi Tang

Online Survey

HRM residents were invited to provide feedback online through the JustFOOD Action Survey, which was developed in consultation with the HFPA steering committee. The survey offered a space for the public to share insights, priorities, goals; and identify actions intended to strengthen our local food system. The survey opened October 15, 2021 and closed March 20, 2022. A total of 197 responses were submitted. As many of the responses were submitted to record group sessions, the total number of people involved was greater than the number of individual surveys submitted.

The survey was designed using the food system principles and goals of the JustFOOD Framework: (1) **Social Justice**: Define Food as a Human Right; (2) **Environment**: Enhance Ecological Resilience; (3) **Health and Well-being**: Grow Knowledge and Skills; (4) **Celebration**: Sharing Our Diversity; and (5) **Local Economy**: Strengthen Regional Economies.

Survey respondents were asked to describe their vision for the food system and provide feedback and ideas for action on any one or more of the 5 goals. This feedback was reviewed and common themes were identified.

Vision

Forty-nine distinct "vision statements" were recorded. The five most common visions for our food system are laid out here.

a. Healthy food is available and affordable for everyone.

b. I have better access to fresh and locally grown food.

c. There is universal basic income and/or living wages.

d. There is improved geographic access to food.

e. There is systemic support for local farmers and producers.

These vision statements speak to a desire for a socially equitable food system, where all community members are able to access nutritious and local food with dignity, and where food system workers are valued and receive systemic government and consumer support.

Many of the vision statements speak to a desire for healthy communities. Survey respondents, on the whole, want to see food at the heart of our communities, and suggested that the Municipality promote food security through integrated land use planning, transportation planning, and community design.

Other visions identified by the respondents include a:

- Food system that actively resists colonialism and white supremacy, and to see a food system approach in which Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) knowledge is respected and BIPOC voices are centred.
- Localized food system.
- Self-sufficient Nova Scotia, in which the province produces enough food locally to protect against climate emergencies or disruptions in the supply chain.
- Food system that promotes sustainable food production and consumption.
- Food system that emphasizes and prioritizes environmental health as the foundation for all health.
- Food system in which a greater number of social services are continually funded by the Municipality and the Province alike.

Social Justice: Define Food As A Human Right

Thirty-six distinct actions were identified through the Social Justice section of the survey. The five most common actions identified in this section are laid out here.

1. Develop a system whereby low-income residents can access discounted / subsidized local food (e.g., social supermarket model), moving away from the food-bank model.
2 Improve the accessibility, affordability, equity of public transportation services and active transport routes for residents in food deserts.
3. Partner with relevant organizations to extend food programming access beyond traditional working hours and on weekends.
4. Support the operations and expansion of the Mobile Food Market and similar low-cost, fresh produce delivery services.
5. Provide in-kind or monetary support to people or groups interested in gardening at home, starting a community garden, or joining an existing garden with plot fees.

These actions show a desire to support equity-seeking communities and those most vulnerable to food insecurity in accessing nutritious food. Respondents identified income as a root cause of food insecurity, and recommended that a greater number of food-related social services be designed for and provided to food-insecure communities, particularly to low-income community members.

Food sovereignty also emerged as a key theme. Respondents identified the need for a food system in which communities are enfranchised to define their own food systems, and wherein both the means and ends of food production are accessible to all.

- Other key themes identified in the Social Justice section of the survey include the need for:
- Improved, community-based food production and processing infrastructure (e.g., community kitchens and community food hubs)
- Land access and tenure supports in both rural and urban settings
- The need to prevent or redirect food waste wherever possible
- Services, programming, and supports for producers, including new or young farmers; newcomers; farm system workers such as seasonal agricultural workers and temporary foreign workers; housing insecure community members; people with disabilities; single adults living alone; seniors; and students

Local Economy: Strengthen Regional Economies

Twenty-four distinct actions were identified through the Local Economy section of the survey. The five most common actions identified in this section are laid out here.

1. Encourage the development of accessible and affordable farmers' markets in as many communities as possible.
2. Develop policies and education campaigns that support and incentivize local food production and consumption.
3 Support the development of local food hubs.
4. Provide in-kind or financial support to urban agriculture initiatives that produce and market local food.
5. Incentivize small-scale food retail throughout HRM.

These actions identify a desire to support local food consumption and production, thereby returning food dollars to the local economy. Respondents identified small-scale, local food producers and retailers as key actors in the regional economy, and recognized that, by supporting these producers and retailers, we can promote circular economies. Although these actions identify programming and policy supports as important to strengthening our local economy, respondents also identify a need for infrastructure (e.g., food hubs) that enable greater local production, processing, and distribution power. Such infrastructure allows food system activities that might otherwise be outsourced to remain local, thereby keeping food dollars within our local economies.

Environment: Enhance Ecological Resilience

Twenty distinct actions were identified through the Local Economy section of the survey. The five most common actions identified in this section are laid out here.

a. Partner with relevant organizations to develop programs, policies, and public education campaigns to encourage regenerative agriculture practices.

b. Improve the local accessibility of high quality compost.

c. Promote delicious, plant-rich or plant-based diets through public education campaigns and institutional procurement policies that prioritize plant-based diets.

d. Develop seed-sharing resources.

e. Support and collaborate with farmers on a just transition to regenerative practices, including enabling technologies.

These actions show an interest in supporting local agriculture to be a catalyst for improving the health and resilience of our environment. The most common theme was around promoting regenerative agriculture practices. Respondents also showed an interest in access to high-quality compost suitable for agriculture, which is not widely available in HRM. Several respondents suggest that supporting plant-based diets through public procurement and education programs is an avenue for the public sector to support personal health and ecological resilience in the food system. Together these actions show a desire to make both food production and consumption practices more sustainable so that future generations can enjoy locally grown, high quality, nutritious foods.

Health, Well-being, and Resilience: Grow Knowledge and Skills

Thirty distinct actions were identified through the Health, Well-being, and Resilience section of the survey. The five most common actions identified in this section are laid out here.

a. Increase the number of community gardens and plot allotments in HRM, and provide residents with more spaces to grow food.

b. Partner with relevant organizations to equip communities with the knowledge to produce and cook healthy food locally and sustainably, through free and low-cost workshops, cooking classes, and more).

c. Support operations + development of school meal programming services.

d. Promote food-skills programming and food-literacy programming in schools and for youth.

e. Develop services and employ a greater number of dieticians to provide free and low-cost nutritional services and to lead public education campaigns around nutrition (and food as it relates to healthcare).

Respondents showed interest in building community capacity for residents to grow their own food and learn to cook healthy meals at home by increasing the number of community garden spaces and food-skills workshops. Healthy school food programming and food-literacy classes were also a common recommendation, showing the importance of schools as opportunities for public health promotion, nutrition, and community development.

Celebration: Sharing Our Diversity

Ten distinct actions were identified through the Celebration section of the survey. The five most common actions identified in this section are laid out here.

a. Partner with relevant organizations to host community barbeques and feasts that bring people together and celebrate food.

b. Explore ways to increase the cultural and ethnic diversity of produce sold at farmers' markets and in stores.

c. Support organizations in offering culturally diverse food preparation classes with both in-person and virtual attendance options.

d. Partner with relevant organizations to host public events where community members can share recipes and celebrate local produce and producers.

e. Support programming opportunities for newcomers to share knowledge and skills with other newcomers and longtime residents alike.

Food brings people together and provides opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue. These actions show an interest in supporting a greater number of community feasts and festivals which celebrate our cultural diversity, and bring vibrancy to the community. Respondents also recommended that farmers' markets seek to increase the cultural diversity of their products. Food-skills workshops should reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of residents, and provide newcomers with opportunities to share their knowledge with the community.

Targeted Engagement

Targeted Engagements sessions were hosted in collaboration with community partners that work with or represent equity-seeking communities and those particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. These Targeted Engagement sessions ran through Phase One of engagement, starting in November 2021 and ending in April 2022. During these focus group sessions, community members were invited to give feedback on actions and priorities for the Plan. These sessions were designed with the recognition that knowledge and expertise lie in communities that experience disproportionate rates of food insecurity, which is often a result of or compounded by systemic dispossession, and that our role is to provide opportunities for these communities to shape our food system. Sessions for migrant workers in the agriculture and seafood processing sectors were hosted by No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia via WhatsApp, and were offered in both Spanish and Jamaican Patois. Overall, targeted engagement sessions were designed to remove barriers and support the participation of these equity-seeking communities in as many ways as possible, working with groups when, where, and how they wanted to be involved, in addition to providing community members compensation for participation. A total of 15 Targeted Engagement sessions were hosted in collaboration with our community partners.

During the targeted engagement phase, HRM and the HFPA organized dozens of meetings with community organizations, government officials, and food system actors such as farmers and agricultural groups. This table lists organizations and government partners engaged by HRM and the HFPA.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
AKOMA
Bayers Westwood FRC
Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia Health Community Health Boards - Central Zone
Chebucto Connections
Common Roots
Dalhousie Urban Garden Society
Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia
Feed Nova Scotia
Halifax Public Libraries
IWK Health Promotion Team
Loaded Ladle
Meal Exchange
Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre and Centre for Child Development
Migrant Workers in the Canadian Maritimes
No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture
Nova Scotia Native Women's Association
ONE North End
reachAbility
Reclaiming Our Roots
Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia
The New Agrarians
The North Grove
United Way Halifax
Veith House
Wooden Monkey Restaurant
YMCA
Young Agrarians-Provincial Ag Land Matching

PROVINCIAL PARTNERS
Joint Prevention and Promotion Committee
Child Poverty Roundtable
Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture
Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Divert Nova Scotia

HRM BUSINESS UNITS
HalifACT
Right of Way
Solid Waste
Planning & Development
Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Parks and Rec: Community Development
Parks and Rec: Urban Forestry
Government Relations and External Affairs: Social Policy
Government Relations and External Affairs: Public Safety
Office of the Mayor

Phase Two Engagement

Feedback

Phase Two of engagement began in May 2022, after a set of proposed recommendations was developed based on a review of Phase One engagement as well as previous work and best-practices research. HRM and the HFPA then sought feedback on the proposed actions to refine and expand them. The actions were first shared with the HFPA Steering Committee members for revisions, then circulated to the partners who participated in targeted engagement sessions. HRM and the HFPA then incorporated comments and suggestions, circling back with partners to review adjusted language.

Advisory Groups

During the analysis of engagement data from Phase One and following the development of Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, HRM and the HFPA identified several critical gaps in Plan recommendations, including but not limited to recommendations pertaining to Indigenous Peoples, the African Nova Scotian community, and the disability community. Although community members and partners from each of these communities had been consulted with during Phase One, HRM and the HFPA identified a need for further consultation, which was achieved through the formation of three distinct Advisory Groups. Advisors were hired to attend collaborative afternoon workshops facilitated by HRM and the HFPA, where participants met to discuss the recommendations and create community-specific actions. Advisory members are invited to continue to participate in the development and implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* through involvement in one or more of the proposed Working Groups.

Appendix 3. JustFOOD Action Plan Framework

JustFOOD
Action Plan for the Halifax Region

VISION A Halifax region where no one is hungry, where food & people are celebrated, where the local economy is strong, and the environment is protected for generations to come.

Why JustFOOD Matters

Halifax has one of the highest rates of food insecurity[1] among Canadian municipalities. There is a need to build on our strengths through strategic investments, coordination of efforts, and creative collaborations to address inequities and strengthen our food system. JustFOOD will work with community and other stakeholders to identify the actions needed to achieve our VISION and develop the resources and commitments required to make these actions a reality.

Who is Behind JustFOOD?

JustFOOD is co-led by Halifax Regional Municipality and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance, as the backbone for the collaborations and collective effort needed for positive change.

HALIFAX

HALIFAX FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

JustFOOD is guided by the principles, goals and strategies for success shown here:

Food Justice is at the core of JustFOOD. Food justice is about making sure that the benefits and risks of our food system are shared fairly amongst us all.

Our **Food System** is the activities and relationships that influence how we grow, catch, process, distribute, buy & sell, prepare & eat, and dispose of food.

Measure Progress · Respond to Changing Needs · Engage Local Leadership · Be Bold · Plan for Future Generations · Work Together

Food Justice — ENVIRONMENT: Enhance Ecological Resilience; SOCIAL JUSTICE: Define Food as a Human Right; LOCAL ECONOMY: Strengthen Regional Economies; CELEBRATION: Sharing Our Diversity; HEALTH & WELL-BEING: Grow Knowledge & Skills

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

[1] 1 in 7 people experience household food insecurity. Tarasuk, V., Mitchell, A., Dachner, N. (2016). Household food insecurity in Canada, 2014. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). Retrieved from: http://proof.utoronto.ca.

JustFOOD | Please get in touch at justfood@ecologyaction.ca to join the conversation and help JustFOOD grow.

JustFOOD Principles

The following principles have been adopted from the Halifax Food Charter and serve as foundations for our work:

JustFOOD Goals

The following draft goals have been developed to progress the principles and inform actions:

SOCIAL JUSTICE

We all need to eat. Everyone deserves good food that they need and enjoy. We should be able to produce, prepare and access food safely and with dignity.

Define Food as a Human Right

Access to food is a basic and foundational human right which we work to make a living reality through systemic change.

Sample strategy: Promote living wages to meet basic needs like food and housing.

LOCAL ECONOMY

Supporting local farmers, fishers, and producers is an essential part of the food system. Local food strengthens our communities and helps us adapt to changes in our world.

Strengthen Regional Economies

A robust local food system is supported by our regional food assets and expertise.

Sample strategy: Expand and connect local food infrastructure for food processing, storage and distribution.

CELEBRATION

Food brings people together. It helps us celebrate our culture and traditions, and learn more about each other.

Share Our Diversity

Through the establishment of food as a human right, communities are strengthened and brought together through growing, accessing, preparing and sharing food across cultures.

Sample strategy: Encouraging school food and garden initiatives to grow and share different food cultures, and involve many generations.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Food is crucial for health and wellbeing, it nourishes and connects us. Communities must be supported and empowered to make it easy to grow, get, eat, and share good food.

Grow Knowledge and Skills

People have the ability and tools to access and share knowledge and resources to grow, access, and prepare food.

Sample strategies: Expand food literacy programming in public education; use public spaces for food initiatives.

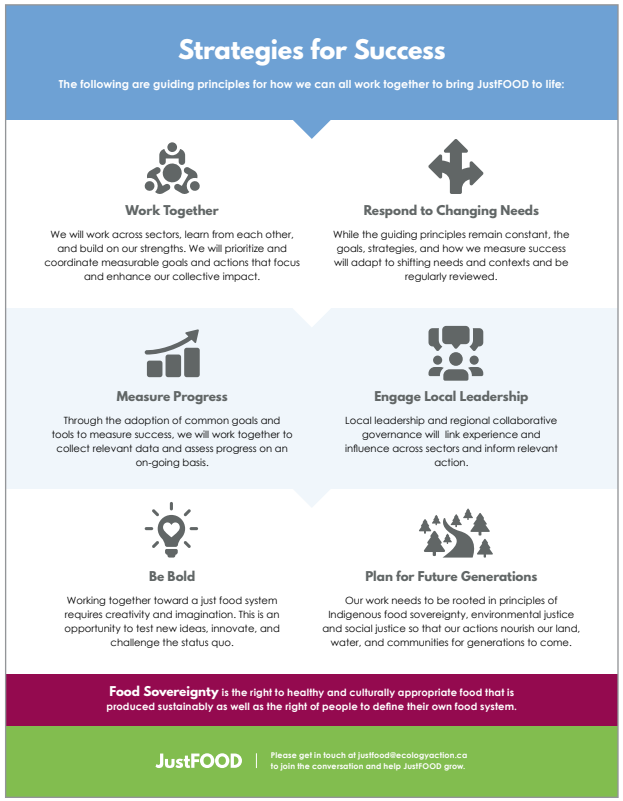
ENVIRONMENT

Food and the earth are precious. We need to produce, share, and eat food in ways that protect the environment and our future.

Enhance Ecological Resilience

Lands and waters are honoured, protected and restored so they can sustain us to grow, share, and consume food for generations to come.

Sample strategy: Coordinate with HRM's Climate Action Plan and Provincial climate and agricultural initiatives.



Strategies for Success

The following are guiding principles for how we can all work together to bring JustFOOD to life:

Work Together

We will work across sectors, learn from each other, and build on our strengths. We will prioritize and coordinate measurable goals and actions that focus and enhance our collective impact.

Respond to Changing Needs

While the guiding principles remain constant, the goals, strategies, and how we measure success will adapt to shifting needs and contexts and be regularly reviewed.

Measure Progress

Through the adoption of common goals and tools to measure success, we will work together to collect relevant data and assess progress on an on-going basis.

Engage Local Leadership

Local leadership and regional collaborative governance will link experience and influence across sectors and inform relevant action.

Be Bold

Working together toward a just food system requires creativity and imagination. This is an opportunity to test new ideas, innovate, and challenge the status quo.

Plan for Future Generations

Our work needs to be rooted in principles of Indigenous food sovereignty, environmental justice and social justice so that our actions nourish our land, water, and communities for generations to come.

Food Sovereignty is the right to healthy and culturally appropriate food that is produced sustainably as well as the right of people to define their own food system.

JustFOOD | Please get in touch at justfood@ecologyaction.ca to join the conversation and help JustFOOD grow.

https://justfoodhalifax.ca/setting-the-table/justfood-framework/

HALIFAX

HALIFAX FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

justfoodhalifax.ca