



To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee

Date: June 12, 2009

From: Amarjeet Rattan, Director, Corporate Programs Management Group (CPMG)

File: 01-0370-01/2009-Vol01

Re: Recommended Food Security Response for the City of Richmond

Staff Recommendation

That:

1. A letter be sent to Metro Vancouver requesting that the Metro Vancouver Board take a regional food security leadership role by preparing and implementing a collaborative regional Food Security Strategy and Implementation Program.
2. The Food Security Response Agenda, as outlined in Attachment 2 of the staff report dated June 12, 2009 from the Director of CPMG, be endorsed.

Amarjeet Rattan,  
Director, CPMG  
(604-247-4686)

Att. 3

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY					
<b>ROUTED TO:</b>				<b>CONCURRENCE</b>	
Real Estate Services.....				Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>REVIEWED BY TAG</b>		YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>RR</i>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>REVIEWED BY CAO</b> <i>acting</i>	
		YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>RR</i>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>		

## Staff Report

### Origin

Richmond Council has made a number of specific referrals pertaining to local agriculture and food (Attachment 1). This report provides recommended options for Council consideration to address these referrals. This report also recommends that Council adopt a strategic approach, one which advocates for strengthened regional government leadership and is guided by an overarching Food Security Response Agenda (Attachment 2). Effectively responding to food security is a complex and multi-stakeholder endeavour, necessitating partnerships and action by all levels of government and sectors of society. With a wide range of existing and potential action possibilities, a strategic approach will assist the City in pursuing those initiatives of optimal effect.

### Background

#### *About Food Security*

Food security is widely described as the condition in which all people at all times can acquire safe, nutritionally adequate, and personally acceptable foods in a manner that maintains human dignity<sup>1</sup>. Food security encompasses adequacy in both the amount and quality of food at levels sufficient to enjoy a healthy lifestyle<sup>2</sup>. To achieve a food secure system, there needs to be:

1. a system in place for **growing food** in a sustainable manner (e.g., land-base available to produce food; food produced is affordable; provides economic well-being for commercial producers; uses resources in a sustainable manner; preserves the natural processes upon which agriculture depend, etc.);
2. a system in place which enables **access** in a sustainable manner (e.g., affordable living conditions in order that people can access sufficient amounts of quality food, efficient distribution system with limited to no waste, sustainable transportation systems, etc.).

Significant achievements have been made in food production, distribution and access<sup>3</sup>. However, not everyone is able to meet their basic food requirement. Compounding on an already existing challenge of not meeting current needs, the production and access of food is expected to become even more challenging in the future at all scales (i.e., globally, nationally and locally) as a result of increasing demand, growing poverty and diminished productivity gains (Attachment 3).

#### *Action Being Taken*

A wide range of organizations and individuals, including the private sector, non-profit groups and governments, have been working towards having everyones' basic food needs met. Many successes have been achieved including increased production and strengthened community self-reliance. A

<sup>1</sup> Food security is defined by the World Food Summit as existing "when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (UN Food and Agriculture Organization, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> An effective Food Security System addresses the following elements:

- Availability - sufficient supplies of food for all people at all times
- Accessibility - physical and economic access to food for all at all times
- Acceptability - culturally acceptable and appropriate food and distribution systems
- Adequacy - nutritional quality, safety, sustainability of available sources/methods of food supply
- Action - ensuring the social and economic infrastructures are in place to enable action that will ensure the previous four elements of food security (Growing Food Security In Alberta, 2006)

<sup>3</sup> Between the years 1950 and 1984, world grain production increasing by over 250%

summary overview of action being taken by the various levels of government, the City of Richmond, other local jurisdictions and the Richmond community is provided in Attachment 3.

Action being advanced by the City of Richmond include:

- Community planning policies for protecting local agricultural lands
- Improving agricultural productivity through strengthened city servicing (e.g., East Richmond Drainage Study)
- Encouraging urban agricultural production through use of community gardens
- Community planning policies and initiatives aimed at environmental sustainability (e.g., OCP policies protecting environmentally sensitive areas)
- Providing educational programs on healthy eating and sustainable food systems (e.g., growing, cooking, composting, organic pest management, etc.)
- Supporting action being taken by community groups, including:
  - the Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Farm Project at Terra Nova Rural Park which grows produce in support of the Richmond Food Bank, and
  - the Terra Nova Schoolyard Society which offers programs to elementary school students about growing food and healthy eating.

In 2007, the volunteer-run Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Project donated 15,000 pounds of food. It aims to re-distribute more than 250,000 pounds of food by 2012)

### *Council Referrals*

Richmond Council has made a number of referrals pertaining to food security. Background on each referral is provided below. Recommended action is provided in the following Analysis section. A summary of the referrals, inclusive of recommended action, is provided in Attachment 1.

#### **Referral 1 – Staff to review Food Security and Urban Agriculture Best Practices**

Staff have reviewed food security policies and initiatives in other jurisdictions (local, state, province) in both Canada and the US. This review found that very few municipalities are looking at overall food systems and as such there are no established best practices for local governments. Cities that are looking at overall systems, such as City of Vancouver and Toronto, have pursued various action. Initiatives include conducting food assessment studies, encouraging community and roof-top gardens, providing listing of emergency food programs, providing education on food nutrition, promoting farmer markets and reducing organic waste material. A commonality among jurisdictions advancing on food security was the establishment of an advisory group, often referred to as a Food Policy Council. These advisory groups had broad representation from all aspects of the food system (production, distribution, access, consumption and waste management).

A few municipalities, including Vancouver, Toronto, Portland and Seattle have dedicated staff resources responsible for advancing food security. A key role of these positions is often to liaise with and support the work of Food Policy Councils (FPC). The first Food Policy Council was established in 1987 by the City of Knoxville, Tennessee. Since that time, more than 80 food policy councils have been established by states, counties and cities across North America. Food Policy Councils are recognized by several professional organizations, including the National Association of Counties, as a best practice. In general, Food Policy Councils monitor and evaluate the performance of an area's food system in terms of costs, availability, accessibility, implications for public health/economic

efficiencies, public awareness of food issues and make recommendations for improvements to the food supply and distribution network. Local and other levels of government are affiliated with Food Policy Councils in a variety of ways such as establishing legitimacy, funding, resource and staffing support and appointing officials to serve as members. Further details on action being taken by various organizations is provided in Attachment 3.

### **Referral 2 – Staff to review Food Security Memo from Councillor Steves**

An email memo from Councillor Steves to Mayor and Council expressed concern regarding the food production needs to meet a growing population as well as other trends, including increasing costs. To address this situation, the memo identified the need for a Richmond Food Policy Council and a City staff position of a Food Strategy Development Manager. Recommended action for addressing these suggestions is provided in the following Analysis section.

### **Referral 3 – Staff to review Recommendations from Richmond Community Food Action Initiative**

Staff were asked to explore the feasibility of appointing a City staff liaison to the Richmond Food Security Task Force and to examine the opportunity for the City to work with the Richmond Food Security Task Force to begin developing a food strategy for Richmond.

The Richmond's community-based Food Security Task Force was established in 2001, arising as result of work conducted by the Richmond Poverty Response Committee. Membership on the committee includes Vancouver Coastal Health, the Richmond Food Bank, Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Project as well as several other community groups. It has since transitioned to become a registered non-profit society, "The Richmond Food Security Society. The Society's vision is, "In Richmond, people are making healthy food choices supported by a sustainable, affordable and equitable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and cultural inclusion." The Society has undertaken various action initiatives, most notably preparing a Food Security Strategic Plan in 2008.

City staff have been and will continue to liaise with the Richmond Food Security Society as a means to build greater understanding on local food security needs and facilitate information sharing between the community and the City. Recommended action for addressing the suggestion of developing a food strategy for Richmond is provided in the following Analysis section.

### **Referral 4 – Staff to explore opportunities to support the Richmond Farm School**

The Richmond Farm school is a proposal by Kwantlen University College to partner with the City of Richmond, the Richmond Food Security Society, and the Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Project to prepare, implement and conduct a continuing education program of study of urban and peri-urban agriculture<sup>4</sup>. The School proposal is to establish an one to four year urban agricultural studies program to train individuals in the practical science of growing food as part of a sustainable food system approach. A feature of the curriculum is actual farming, processing and learning to farm, market and sell the products farmed. Kwantlen anticipates that the program will attract a wide range of students, mainly those 25 years of age and older.

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<sup>4</sup> Peri-urban refers to the area that immediately surrounds the urban area.

Staff have engaged in discussions with Kwantlen and understand that Kwantlen is currently in early program preparation. It is understood that the School may operate at multiple locations. To launch the program, Kwantlen needs to:

- secure program funding
- secure land for a smaller area for individual and collective farming (for first year students)
- secure land for larger individual incubation plots (for second and more advanced students where a minimum of 20 acres is required)
- develop and establish a course curriculum
- secure dedicated resources (e.g., hire staff, secure equipment, establish classrooms, etc.).

City staff have encouraged the Richmond Farm School to work with the Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Project to meet initial program needs. Staff will continue to work with Kwantlen to identify any additional partnership opportunities as Kwantlen further develops its program. Staff have requested that Kwantlen prepare a business case to assist in identifying additional partnership opportunities.

Staff will also work with other post-secondary institutions which move towards addressing the food security agenda in an educational setting.

## **Analysis**

Effectively addressing food security is a complex and challenging endeavour. Complexity arises from the cross-cutting nature of the issue with food security intrinsically connected and dependent upon a wide range of conditions and factors, including:

- social capacity (e.g., poverty reduction, affordable housing, accessibility to land, accessibility to fresh and nutritious produce, education and knowledge, etc.)
- economic sustainability (e.g., proximity of employment, job quality, dependency on non-renewable energy sources, agricultural industry sustainability, etc.)
- ecological health (e.g., soil health, air and water quality, pollination productivity, climatic conditions, fisheries sustainability, etc.).

Many municipalities, including Richmond, have advanced policies and initiatives to support local agriculture. Various other initiatives exist among other levels of government and community organizations. However, a complete systems view where agencies and organizations consider the sustainable food system in its entirety is a very new and evolving agenda.

Accordingly, with a wide range of potential action items, food security initiatives by local governments need to be well-considered. Decisions need to be made about what is the appropriate role of local governments, what actions result in the best gains and how resources can be leveraged to support this largely new service area. Local government action also need to strategize on how to best allocate limited community resources across multiple sustainability priorities and ensure that appropriate action is being taken across multiple governmental agencies and community organizations.

To support the City in adopting a well-considered approach to food security, staff propose the following initial action plan:

1. 2009

i. Conduct initial scoping (*completed by City Food Security Task group<sup>5</sup>*)

- review best practices
- develop initial action plan
- liaise with the Richmond Food Security Society
- support existing initiatives as they develop (e.g., Richmond Farm School).

ii. Continue to support existing initiatives and undertake additional preliminary strategic action

- encourage MetroVancouver to take strong regional leadership role (Lead - Planning)
- adopt City Food Security Response Agenda as an initial strategic framework (Lead - Sustainability Office)
- liaise with the Richmond Food Security Society (Lead - Parks)
- support existing initiatives (Lead - Planning and Parks).

2. 2010

i. Develop corporate action strategy for Food Security as part of the City's Sustainability Framework strategic planning process. The developed strategy will provide recommendations for Council consideration pertaining to City governance, including what the City's role/responsibilities should be, what resources, if any, are required (i.e., Food Security Development Manager) and appropriate institutional structures, including evaluating merits for a Food Policy Council. Options for working with the community for developing a community-wide strategy will also be considered as a potential action item (Lead - Sustainability Office).

ii. Continue to advance preliminary initiatives

- liaise with the Richmond Food Security Society (Lead - Parks)
- support specific projects and existing initiatives (Lead - Planning and Parks)

This plan is based on the following considerations:

1. Need for Strong Regional Approach

The regional government is in a much stronger position than any individual municipality to bring together the experts with the knowledge from all steps in the food system to define strategies that will have the most impact on the food system. They can also facilitate the collaboration that is necessary among various government agencies, member municipalities, farmers, farm businesses, community organizations and the general public to support the development of a "complete systems" approach. Accordingly, staff recommend that a letter be sent to MetroVancouver Board requesting that the MetroVancouver take a strong leadership role in advancing food security by preparing and implementing a regional Food Security Strategy and Implementation Program.

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<sup>5</sup> As an interim measure, a City Food Security Task group has been assembled consisting of representatives from the City's Sustainability Office, Policy and Planning and Parks, Recreation and Culture.

## 2. Need to Consider in Overall Sustainability Context

While food security is seen as being effectively advanced at the regional scale, it is important for the City of Richmond to clarify its role and responsibilities at the local scale. This clarification will empower the City to advance its interests at the regional scale and ensure that the City is doing its part locally. However, as it is intrinsically linked to the many other dimensions of community sustainability, it is important that a sustainable approach be taken when addressing food security. A sustainable approach is one which considers the multiple needs and objectives of sustainable communities and seeks to advance initiatives across all priority areas.

In Spring 2007, Richmond Council adopted an Enhanced Sustainability Initiative aimed at advancing corporate sustainability performance across the multiple dimensions of sustainability (e.g., food security, climate change, sustainable business, sustainable community development, community safety and health, energy security, waste to resources, ecological system health management, etc.). To support the City in advancing strategic and integrated action, an overarching Sustainability Framework is currently being developed. The purpose of developing the Sustainability Framework is to bring the City's range of existing initiatives together and establish a cohesive and complete systems approach to sustainability. In this way, actions can be evaluated based on their impact on the whole picture and synergies among different action initiatives can be leveraged to result in more impactful benefits.

Due to new legislative requirements and other considerations, initial work on the Sustainability Framework has been focused on strategic planning in the areas of Sustainable Energy Management and Climate Change Response. The first phase of the Sustainability Framework, with the proposed goal areas, and strategic action plan for Climate Change will be provided for Council consideration in July 2009. Local agriculture and food has been identified as one of 9 proposed goal areas in the Sustainability Framework. Staff propose that strategic planning targeting Food Security be advanced in the second phase of the Sustainability Framework development to be initiated in early 2010.

To establish an initial strategic base, however, staff recommend that the City adopt the proposed Food Security Response Agenda provided in Attachment 2. Given that food security is an evolving field with a multitude of possible actions, the proposed framework will serve as an initial compass to guide City decision-making and help the City pursue initiatives which are themselves sustainable (e.g., most appropriate for local government, maximize efficiencies and synergies among City actions, supports responsible action by all, direct resources towards City priorities, etc.). The recommended Response Agenda proposes 3 areas of strategic focus:

- **Empower** - *raising awareness and building capacity to help support the development of a whole-system approach, including advocating for strengthened regional approach*
- **Grow** - *working in partnership to meet the food supply needs of the community today and tomorrow*
- **Access** - *taking local government action in support of the equitable distribution of food*

Defining characteristics of the proposed Food Security Response Agenda are that it:

- sets a simple and engaging City framework that is long-term and strategic;
- strives to balance efforts to meet current needs with respect to affordability and food accessibility, while investing resources to support the development of a more sustainable local food system;

- places priority on engagement with the wider community (e.g., City corporation, public, industry, businesses, other levels of government, etc.) in recognition that action must be taken by all.

Each strategic focus area identifies the evolution from a collection of ad-hoc initiatives to a strategic management approach, including objective setting, strategic action planning, implementation, performance review and improvement.

The City's Sustainability Office will be responsible for the overall management and coordination of the Food Security Response Agenda. The strategic areas of focus identified in the Food Security Response Agenda will be integrated into overarching Sustainability Framework.

Staff recommend that any decision on potential dedicated investment of a City position in the area of Food Security, either through reduced City service in an existing area or the establishment of a new position, be considered as part of the strategic Sustainability Framework planning process proposed in 2010. This approach will enable Council to assess resource needs in consideration of the collective needs for advancing sustainability. By considering the entire sustainability picture, staff will also be able to seek and identify potential opportunities for leveraging resources in a manner which may be able to advance multiple goals simultaneously.

### **Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact associated with the recommended action items.

### **Conclusion**

Food security is the foundation of a healthy and sustainable community. However, effectively addressing food security is a complex and challenging endeavour. Complexity arises from the cross-cutting nature of the issue with food security intrinsically connected and dependent upon a wide range of conditions and factors.

To support a strategic approach, this report recommends that the City of Richmond encourage MetroVancouver to undertake a lead role in developing and implementing a strong regional response to Food Security, that the City adopt an initial Food Security Response Agenda and conduct strategic planning as part of the City's Sustainability Framework development process.



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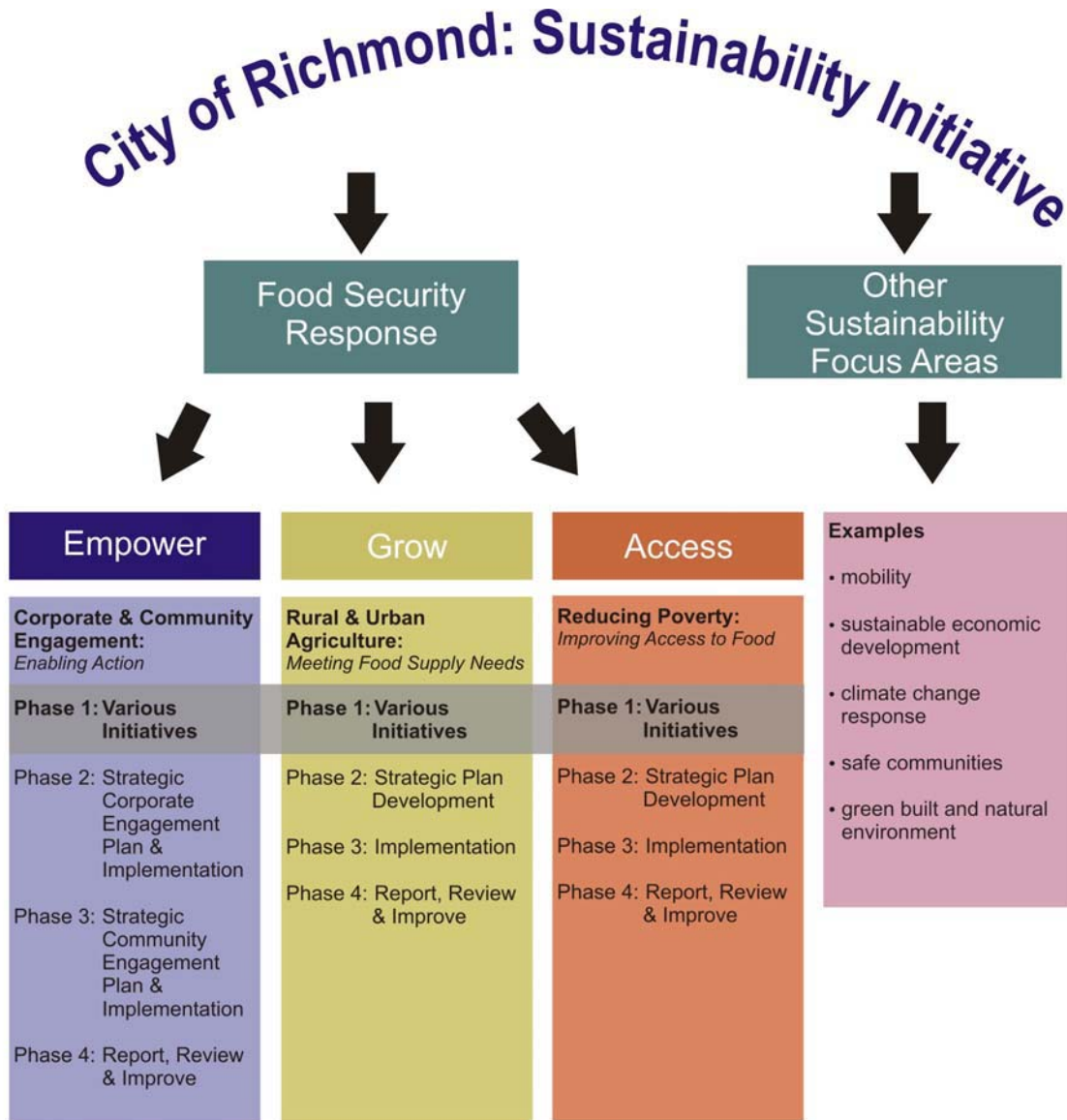
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**Attachment 1: City of Richmond Council Food Security Referrals with Recommended Action**

Referral		Action Taken/ Recommended Action
<p><b>1. Food Security and Urban Agriculture Best Practices</b></p> <p>That the food security staff team investigate food security and urban agriculture best practices.</p>	<p>September 23, 2008</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommend City encourage Metro Vancouver Board to take a strong leadership role in developing and implementing a regional response to food security</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Food Security Memo</b></p> <p>That the memo, dated August 26, 2008 from Councillor Steves, and the attached material regarding Food Security issues, be referred to staff for comment</p> <p><i>The memo identifies the need for both a Richmond Food Policy Council and recommends that the City secure a position for a full-time Food Strategy Development Manager</i></p>	<p>September 3, 2008</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommend City adopt an overarching Food Security Response Agenda to guide local government strategic action. Any additional resource needs will be determined as part of the City's Sustainability Framework development process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Richmond Community Food Action Initiative</b></p> <p>That the update on the Richmond Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI), delivered to the Planning Committee on May 6, 2008 by Mary Gazetas and Margaret Hewlett of the Richmond Food Security Task Force, be referred to staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the feasibility of the appointment of a City staff liaison to the Richmond Food Security Task Force;</li> <li>Examine the opportunity for the City to work with the Richmond Food Security Task Force to begin developing a food strategy for Richmond; and,</li> <li>Investigate resources in the City's 2009 budget for the provision for a Food Security Coordinator City position.</li> </ul>	<p>May 6, 2008</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff will continue to liaise with the Richmond Food Security Society</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Richmond Farm School</b></p> <p>That the City of Richmond endorse Kwantlen Polytechnic University and the Richmond Food Security Tasks Force's concept of the Richmond Farm School as an important component for the agricultural sector in the region.</p> <p>That staff work with Kwantlen Polytechnic University to explore options for a potential location of the Richmond Farm School and potential terms of a lease or license to occupy.</p>	<p>December 8, 2008</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff have encouraged the Richmond Farm School to work with the Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Project to meet initial program needs. Staff will continue to work with Kwantlen to identify any additional partnership opportunities as Kwantlen further develops its program.</li> </ul>
<p>That the proposed concept, to develop an academic centre devoted to research, education and development expressly focused on urban agriculture, be referred to staff for further study and comment; and;</p> <p>In studying the proposed concept, that staff:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with Kwantlen University College's administration to explore if, where and how the proposed concept is supported by Kwantlen University College;</li> <li>Identify the infrastructure implications;</li> <li>Explore various sites as a possible location;</li> <li>Consider the possibility of the City utilizing any of its resources to support the proposal;</li> <li>Consider which City resources might be contributed to the proposed concept;</li> <li>Investigate what other institutions could do as potential partners; and,</li> <li>Explore the location and proximity needs, options and implications regarding the site of the proposed academic centre in relation to the Richmond campus of Kwantlen University College.</li> </ol>	<p>May 5, 2008</p>	

**Attachment 2: City of Richmond - Proposed Food Security Response Framework**



■ denotes current City of Richmond action

March 2009

### Attachment 3: Background – About Food Security

#### Current Conditions

Although there is sufficient food produced to meet feed current populations, more than 800 million people worldwide face hunger each day<sup>6</sup>. While the vast majority of Canadians are currently food secure, about 1.1 million Canadians (approximately 9.2 % of the population) are living in “food-insecure” households (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2006). Conditions in BC are similar to that found nationally with approximately 10% of households report being moderately to severely food insecure. Over 76,000 people, including close to 28,000 children, exhibit food insecurity at levels that they need to depend on food banks (Provincial Health Services Authority, 2008).

In Richmond, no research was found that identified the number households faced with food security challenges. It is known, however, that the number of visits to the Richmond Food Bank has been increasing over the years. In 2008, there were 16,795 visits, representing a 7% increase from 2007. For the month of January 2009, there was a 23% increase in the average number of households served weekly from 2008 (406 families per week in 2009 compared to 329 households per week).

#### Trends

Concerning trends include:

- **increasing population and food demand** – “to keep up with the projected growth in human population, more food will have to be produced worldwide over the next 50 years than has been during the past 10,000 years combined” (Guardian, 2007)
- **growing inequity, reduced housing affordability and increasing poverty** – income limitations significantly reduce access to nutritious food. The rent-food dichotomy means that housing payments often have the priority over food purchases in low income families.
- **decreasing viability** of agricultural industry as result of:
  - *loss of arable land* - competing land use demands, soil erosion, etc.
  - *diminishing economic viability* - low prices for agricultural product, declining farm incomes, an aging generation of farmers, the high cost of getting into farming
  - *degradation of supporting natural resource base* – diminishing freshwater supplies; diminishing soil quality; loss of fisheries, diminishing genetic resources, etc. by past and current agricultural practices<sup>7</sup> and other human activities
  - *unsustainable energy dependency* – current food producing practices are energy-intensive, relying heavily on non-renewable fossil fuels<sup>8</sup>, ratio of crops being produced per energy input is in decline and current practices result in an overall net energy loss<sup>9</sup>
  - *climate change* - the use of fossil fuels in agriculture contributes to the emissions of greenhouse gases and as such the onset of climate change. Climatic change, in return, is

<sup>6</sup> In 2001, over 1 billion people survived on less than a dollar a day.

<sup>7</sup> Over much of the world, fisheries have been reduced by 90% of pre-industrial levels, about 15-35% of irrigation withdrawals already exceed supply rates and 40% of agricultural land is degraded (UN Millenium Ecosystem Assessment, )

<sup>8</sup> The food eaten by British Columbian's has been estimated to travel an average of 2,500 km from the point of production to the point of consumption. Access to inexpensive energy is a major component of the current economy. Future food costs and output are highly depended upon future energy supplies and pricing.

<sup>9</sup> Current agricultural practices depend hydrocarbon-fueled irrigation systems and are heavily dependent on chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, many of which are developed from fossil fuels

anticipated to have adverse impacts to agriculture (e.g., reduced water supplies, increased pest incidence, higher intensity weather conditions, etc.)

- **decreasing community self-reliance** – with an increasing dependency on global systems, communities are often presented with opportunities for greater diversity of produce and lower costs. However, reduced self-reliance also means communities are more vulnerable to global market conditions and have reduced ability to respond locally to changing conditions and emergency conditions.

## Current Action

### *Canadian Government*

In 1996, Canada joined 186 other nations and endorsed the goal of the World Food Summit (WFS) “to reduce the number of undernourished people by half no later than 2015” . To meet its commitments, Canada developed an Action for Food Security in 1998 which directs action towards a wide range of action areas such as education, poverty reduction, improving access to safe and nutritious food, environmentally sustainable practices, food production and fair trade. Recent assessments have indicated that poverty and inequality are increasing in Canada and that it will not be possible to meet the World Food Summit goal by 2015.

### *BC Government*

The Provincial Health Services Authority has identified food security as a core public health function and launched the Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI). The Community Food Action Initiative is one program under ActNow BC – an initiative launched by BC Premier Gordon Campbell to make the province by 2010 the “ healthiest jurisdiction to ever host an Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.”

The CFAI is a strategic initiative to:

- identify priorities
- build capacity and share better practices in food security
- facilitate networks and linkages among community groups, provincial organizations and government ministries and support development of food security policy.

A number of other ministries play a role in addressing components which affect food security such as agricultural economic development, poverty reduction, education, income-assistance and environmental protection. The Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is also a key organization overseeing the protection of the BC’s agricultural land reserve.

### *MetroVancouver*

Metro Vancouver’s Sustainability Framework approved by the Board in May 2008 identified a Regional Foods Systems Strategy as a priority action. MetroVancouver staff are currently organizing a regional symposium, expected to be held in late 2009, to develop the objectives and framework of the Regional Food Systems Strategy.

### *Local Government Action*

In recent years, local governments in Canada and the United States have supported various food-related projects such as support for community gardens, farmers markets and other urban agriculture initiatives, food store retail access, community health initiatives and action to facilitate emergency food distribution. At present, very few municipalities are responding to food security in a strategic

and cohesive manner which aim to develop integrated food policy responses which consider the entire food system (e.g., food production, distribution, access, consumption and waste management) and roles of responsibilities of all parties (e.g., private sector, different levels of government, community groups, individual residents, etc.). A few municipalities, including Vancouver, Toronto, Portland and Seattle have dedicated staff resources responsible for advancing food security. A key role of these positions is often to liaise with and support the work of Council-appointed community-based Food Policy Councils (FPC)<sup>10</sup>.

### *City of Richmond Action*

The City of Richmond has undertaken a number of initiatives related to food security including:

#### *1. Community Empowerment*

- Providing educational programs on healthy eating and sustainable food systems (e.g., growing, cooking, composting, organic pest management, etc.)
- Strengthening citizen involvement (e.g., Agricultural Advisory Committee, Advisory Committee to the Environment, etc.);
- Supporting action being taken by community groups, including:
  - the Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Farm Project at Terra Nova Rural Park which grows produce in support of the Richmond Food Bank, and.
  - the Terra Nova Schoolyard Society which offers programs to elementary school students about growing food and healthy eating

#### *2. Supporting Food Production*

- Community planning policies and initiatives aimed at agricultural viability (e.g., OCP policies protecting agricultural lands, agricultural viability strategy, etc.) and environmental sustainability (e.g., OCP policies protecting environmentally sensitive areas),
- Encouraging urban agricultural production through use of community gardens,
- Improving agricultural productivity through strengthened city servicing (e.g., East Richmond Drainage Study).

#### *3. Improving Access to Food*

- Community planning policies and initiatives aimed at increasing affordability (e.g., OCP policies which support live/work/play, Richmond Affordable Housing Strategy, annual City grants to the Poverty Response committee, etc.).

In Spring 2007, Richmond Council also adopted an Enhanced Sustainability Initiative aimed at advancing corporate sustainability performance across the multiple dimensions of sustainability (e.g., food security, climate change, sustainable business, sustainable community development, community safety and health, energy security, waste to resources, ecological system health management, etc.). A current major initiative of the City's Enhanced Sustainability Initiative is the development of an overarching Sustainability Framework which identifies a strategic action plan for advancing sustainability across all priority areas..

<sup>10</sup> The first Food Policy Council was established in 1987 by the City of Knoxville, Tennessee. Since that time, more than 80 food policy councils have been established by states, counties and cities across North America. Food Policy Councils are recognized by several professional organizations, including the National Association of Counties, as a best practice. In general, Food Policy Councils monitor and evaluate the performance of an area's food system in terms of costs, availability, accessibility, implications for public health/economic efficiencies, public awareness of food issues and make recommendations for improvements to the food supply and distribution network. Local and other levels of government are affiliated with Food Policy Councils in a variety of ways such as establishing legitimacy, funding, resource and staffing support and appointing officials to serve as members.

*Richmond Community Action*

The Richmond Community has been very active in food security related initiatives. In 2001, the Richmond Food Security Task Force<sup>11</sup> was established from work conducted by the Richmond Poverty Response Committee. It has since transitioned to become a registered non-profit - the Richmond Food Security Society. The Society's vision is, "In Richmond, people are making healthy food choices supported by a sustainable, affordable and equitable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and cultural inclusion." Following are some of the actions the group has taken since its inception:

- Completed a Richmond Food System Assessment in 2006
- Hosted "Food for All Dialogue" in 2008
- Hosted annual world food day
- Piloted 'pocket-markets' in Richmond
- Prepared a Food Security Strategic Plan in 2008.

Other initiatives, including those that raise awareness and support for local food supply, are being advanced by various sectors in the community (e.g., private sector, public sector, community groups, etc.). Some examples include:

- Cranberry festival at the Nature Park
- Farmers market in Steveston (*May – Oct*)
- Local food stands in the agricultural areas
- Chefs to the Field<sup>12</sup>
- Purchasing fish on the docks at Steveston
- Local wineries using local products.

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<sup>11</sup> Membership includes Vancouver Coastal Health, the Richmond Food Bank, Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Project as well as several other community participants.

<sup>12</sup> Chefs to the Field is an annual celebration of food and organic growing that takes place at Terra Nova Rural Park each August. Hosted by the Terra Nova Schoolyard Society in partnership with the City of Richmond, the event features food samples from the Lower Mainland's top restaurants and culinary institutions as well as a chef's competition. Each chef is allowed one hour to prepare a gourmet meal using freshly harvested local organic ingredients and a secret protein given to them in a black box. Upon receiving their secret ingredients, each chef runs into either the Fruit Tree Sharing Project's Sharing Farm or the Terra Nova Schoolyard Society's Garden to find vegetables to use in preparing their meal. The event is hugely successful, attracting thousands of food lovers from around the Lower Mainland each year.