



RCSAC | Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee

To: Mayor Brodie and Councillors
 From: Kathie Chiu & Alex Nixon, RCSAC Co-Chairs
 CC: Cathy Carlile, Lesley Sherlock & Kim Somerville
 Date: May 2017
 Re: **Richmond Food Systems Advisory Committee**

Purpose			
<p>The purpose of this Communication Tool is to request that Richmond City Council creates a Richmond Food Systems Advisory Committee.</p> <p>This Communication Tool reflects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2012-2041 Official Community Plan, Section 7: Agriculture and Food ● 2014-2018 Council Term Goals, particularly goal 5: Partnerships and Collaborations ● Social Development Strategy, Action 46: Facilitate food security for Richmond residents ● Richmond Wellness Strategy ● Richmond Food Charter ● Metro Vancouver Regional Food System Action Plan 			
Issue	Potential impact	Agency or individuals affected	Advice
<p>With the Richmond Food Charter and Metro Vancouver Regional Food Systems Action Plan endorsed in 2016, there is a need and opportunity to convene a group to address Richmond's food security holistically. We currently have the Agricultural, Community Services, and Environment advisory committees, as well as community groups addressing portions of the food system, but no advisory group dedicated to working on issues concerning the entire food system and focused on developing holistic solutions.</p>	<p>There are significant positive impacts for Richmond residents, such as reduced poverty, greater health, reduced food waste, greater protection of farmland, and a more sustainable city.</p>	<p>Numerous community groups will be invited to participate, including Richmond Food Security Society, Richmond Food Bank, community meal providers, and Poverty Response Committee. Citizen appointees may include farmers and business owners as well as the Richmond School District and Kwantlen Polytechnic University.</p>	<p>Form a Richmond Food Systems Advisory Committee that includes representatives of the whole food system, as well as community organizations, the health authority, and educational institutes to work with City staff and a Council liaison.</p> <p>We suggest funding similar to other Advisory Committees.</p> <p>We suggest allocating staff resources from Parks, Planning, Social Planning, Sustainability, and/ or other relevant departments.</p>

RCSAC Communication Tool Backgrounder: Food Systems Advisory Committee

1. The Issue

The City has three Council advisory committees that provide input to Mayor and Councillors on topics related to food systems; Community Services (food access and affordability), Agricultural (food production) and Environmental (climate change impacts).

However, currently none of the existing committees provide advice on the food system as a whole. The current committees, while focused on their own areas of expertise, do not have the scope to encompass and consider the broader food system in an integrated approach.

A Food Systems Advisory Committee would assist the City of Richmond to advance the following items: 2012-2041 Official Community Plan, Section 7: Agriculture and Food; 2014-2018 Council Term Goal 5: Partnerships and Collaborations; Social Development Strategy, Action 46: Facilitate food security for Richmond residents; the Community Wellness Strategy; and the Metro Vancouver Regional Food System Action Plan.

This action would support the RCSAC 2017 Work Plan objective of “supporting the development of a food security action plan for the City of Richmond”.

2. RCSAC Process

The RCSAC Food Systems Task Force was formed in December 2016 following Council endorsement of the Richmond Food Charter and the Metro Vancouver Regional Food Systems Action Plan to research and consider the benefit and value for the community of a Food Systems Advisory Committee.

Task Force membership includes Anita Georgy (Richmond Food Security Society), Alex Nixon (Richmond Food Bank), De Whalen (Poverty Response Committee), and Belinda Boyd (Vancouver Coastal Health). Brent Mansfield, director of the BC Food Systems Action Network was consulted to understand the Richmond food system in relation to the provincial system.

3. Background

A Richmond Food Charter Working Group was established in 2013 to guide work on the Richmond Food Charter and was led by a partnership between the Richmond Food Security Society and Vancouver Coastal Health. This community-based table includes representatives of the Richmond Food Security Society, the Richmond Poverty Response Committee, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Canadian Federation of University Women. This Working Group presented the Richmond Food Charter to

Council and received Council endorsement in July, 2016. In December, 2016, Council also endorsed the 2016 Metro Vancouver Regional Food System Action Plan.

Many cities across North America are forming Food Policy Councils to look holistically at food system policies. The proposed Richmond Food Systems Advisory Committee is a made-in-Richmond way for us to join leaders in this important movement. The need for a Food Systems Advisory Committee is recognized when considering the range of related issues coming forward to Council, including loss of farmland due to the proposed Massey Bridge, ALR home size guidelines, and Harvest Power operations. The Metro Vancouver Regional Food System Action Plan includes a wide range of additional multi-disciplinary food systems actions for Richmond to take, including everything from supporting local food production and processing, to supporting fish habitat, to mobile markets and street vending opportunities, to educating budding urban farmers, to ensuring drainage is sufficient to address sea level rise.

Proposed stakeholders include businesses (particularly food retailers), School District and Kwantlen Polytechnic University representatives, farmers, health representatives and community services.

Food security for individuals is an increasing challenge that clients of most RCSAC member agencies struggle with. While a large part of that is due to poverty, food access and affordability at a community level are strongly impacted by zoning, local food production, and larger environmental trends.

4. Options

Currently no other committee has the mandate to advise Council on this area.

While alternative options could exist, they would be imperfect. Forming a subcommittee of another advisory committee would ensure that its focus wasn't holistic, and making it a non-City entity would mean that it wouldn't directly advise Council on these issues.

5. Proposed Action

The RCSAC proposes that Council endorse the formation of a Richmond Food Systems Advisory Committee that includes representatives of the whole food system, as well as community organizations, the health authority and educational institutes to work with Staff and a Council Liaison.

Preliminary steps would include forming a working group to draft terms of reference and procedures, and learning from successes in other municipalities while creating a unique model to suit our particular needs.

Funding equivalent to other advisory committees as well as a Staff and Council Liaison would be required from the City of Richmond.