



Food System

1.0 What is a Food System?

593_ A food system refers to all the processes, networks, and infrastructure that are involved with the growth, harvest, processing, packaging, distribution, transport, marketing, sale, serving, consumption, and disposal of food within a city or a region. London's food system includes the prime agricultural land in and around our city, as well as the significant agri-food industry that exists in London that processes, packages, and transports our food to the world. Our food system involves backyard and community gardens, local businesses, and restaurants that sell and serve food, and farmers markets that bring residents, food businesses, and local growers together.

594_ The City has also adopted a *Food Charter* and the policies of this Plan support that Charter.

2.0 Why are Food Systems Important to Our Future?

595_ The production, processing, and distribution of food consumes a significant amount of energy and has a major impact on our environment. Strengthening our local food system so that we can grow and consume more of our food locally, makes us more resilient to escalating energy prices and transportation costs. It also makes us less dependent on other countries to produce the food we consume.

596_ The food production and distribution sector in London employs a large number of people. Recognizing our location within a region that possesses some of the best agricultural land in Canada and the world, we have a strategic advantage to grow our food-related industries for employment and prosperity.

597_ There are portions of our city that can be considered food deserts. These are areas where food is not easily or affordably available within certain communities. These food deserts undermine our goals relating to prosperity, health, and wellness. We will seek to eradicate food deserts that exist in our city, so that all of our communities have easy and affordable access to healthy food within easy walking distance of their homes by 2035.



3.0 What are We Trying to Achieve?

598_ A sustainable food system that contributes to the economic, ecological, and social well-being of our city and region.

599_ Local food production and access to local, regional, national and international agricultural trade markets.

600_ A strengthened local food system infrastructure.

601_ Ready access to high-quality retail grocery stores, farmers markets, and other food sources which provide affordable, safe, healthy, culturally diverse, and local foods.

602_ Alternative ways that Londoners grow, process and sell food within the city.

603_ Opportunities for urban food production on private and public lands.

604_ Community economic development through the growth, processing, packaging, distribution, marketing, sale, and serving of food.

605_ Mechanisms that support and promote food waste recovery and re-use systems that retain biological nutrients for local farmers or other food producers.

4.0 How are We Going to Achieve This?

4.1 Comprehensive Food System Planning

606_ We will participate in coordinated community and regional efforts to develop a more sustainable food system that considers all stages of the food system and that:

1. Encourages local and regional food production and processing, and protection of productive farmland, as provided for by the Farmland Place Type policies of this Plan.
2. Celebrates local food culture, cuisine, and indigenous and local food traditions, in conformity with the Culturally Rich and Diverse City chapter of this Plan.
3. Works with neighbouring municipalities in the region to enhance urban and rural food production, processing, storage, distribution and linkages to the restaurant and tourism sectors, as a basis for region-wide food system planning and policy development.
4. Assesses neighbourhood food system opportunities as part of local area planning.
5. Supports composting from a household to a city-wide level with a goal that most organic waste be diverted from landfill, in conformity with the Civic Infrastructure and Green and Healthy City chapters of this Plan.

607_ All Londoners should have access to food within their neighbourhood.

608_ Opportunities will be explored to locate grocery stores as a part of a complete community, accessible to key pedestrian routes and transit.

609_ Encourage grocery store, farmers market, and community garden uses in areas that have been identified as a food desert.

610_ Promote and secure agricultural industries that will connect into regional efforts in support of agricultural development.

611_ Promote London as a pollinator sanctuary, considering how we can create and support environments that are conducive to pollinators in all of the planning and public works we are involved with, recognizing the important role that pollinators play in our long-term food security.

612_ Promote tourism activities which draw activity to both Rural and Urban London's food sector.

613_ The local production of food should be promoted with other tourism and recreational activity initiatives from farm-based activities to restaurants and markets.

614_ Promote all forms of livestock farming and animal husbandry within the Farmland Place Type. Keeping of livestock and pursuing animal husbandry activities is not permitted within the Urban Place Types.

4.2 Community Benefit

615_ Create and promote opportunities for community gardens and local markets that:

1. Encourage and support urban food production on private and public land, and identify opportunities on surplus lands where it is safe and suitable, and the soil can support gardening within the urban area.
2. Identify potential City-owned sites where different food production activities might be supported.
3. Identify the roles and responsibilities of participants.
4. Provide mechanisms to acquire land for gardening purposes, where appropriate.

616_ Prepare and implement a community garden strategy to:

1. Strengthen and nurture neighbourhoods and Londoners.
2. Promote civic life and social equity.
3. Promote environmental stewardship.
4. Improve quality of life.
5. Provide affordable food to residents.



617_ In conformity with the community garden strategy, establish at least one community garden per neighbourhood, co-located with community facilities or services where possible, or alternatively, on private lands. Prioritize neighbourhoods that feature a high proportion of rental or attached housing.

618_ Rooftop gardens, where buildings can support them, will be encouraged.

619_ The provision of publicly-accessible rooftop garden space and green roofs designed for food production or recreation may be eligible for bonusing, in conformity with the Bonus Zoning policies in the Our Tools part of this Plan.

620_ The opportunity to promote food production on public lands such as parks and street rights-of-way will be explored.

621_ Market gardens and roadside stands which sell fresh seasonal produce grown in London may be permitted as temporary uses within both the Rural and Urban portions of the city, provided they are safely located and in conformity with the Mobility policies of this Plan and the *Zoning By-law*.

622_ In cooperation with the school boards, school yards will be promoted as locations for community gardens due to their educational and community value. Similarly, hospitals, places of worship and higher education institutions will be encouraged to consider community gardens.

623_ Create opportunities for jobs and economic diversity in food systems through support for small business and entrepreneurs involved in the production of artisanal food products and other goods using locally-sourced materials.

624_ Consider greenhouses and other amenities as part of community gardens where appropriate infrastructure is available to support their construction and operation.

625_ The operation of a City of London community garden program will ensure efficient and effective service processes and meaningful community development and outreach.

626_ Support food banks and other social enterprises that help to provide and distribute food to those Londoners that need it the most. Support before-school programs that ensure that children have access to nutritional meals in the morning.

627_ Support educational programs that teach Londoners how to eat healthy.

4.3 Public/Private Partnerships

628_ Establish partnerships with private businesses, non-profit groups, and volunteers to promote London as a centre for agricultural and related employment.

629_ In coordination with public/private partners, create public awareness and provide education about the connection between local food and healthy living.

630_ Encourage alternative food provision including food co-operatives and on-street food markets to ensure all Londoners have access to nutritious food.

631_ Consider and establish new and innovative approaches to urban food production that increase food security, such as cooperative farming initiatives and urban garden plots on vacant, city-owned lands.

632_ Promote a full diversity of food, including a broad selection, to provide all Londoners with access to as many possible elements of a healthy diet as possible.

633_ Promote access to food that is culturally diverse and support the production, processing, and selling of a wide variety of foods which may be promoted and available throughout the city and as part of community events in the city.

634_ Promote food-based community economic development incubators that help new food-related businesses to establish in London.

4.4 City Investment

635_ As appropriate, invest in urban food projects through grants and funding to implement the City's community garden strategy and projects that support the *Food Charter*.

636_ Protect and preserve the city's farmlands and agricultural-related industries as part of a sustainable food system.

637_ As part of the City's economic development strategy, target and attract agri-business and food processing facilities to locate in London, to add value to locally and regionally grown food as a sustainable source of local jobs.

638_ Encourage and secure farmers markets that will connect Rural London to Urban London and to the region. The promotion of farmers markets may:

1. Create markets large enough to be economical for farmers and other vendors.
2. Provide for locally grown produce and/or processed goods.
3. Be almost entirely food-based.
4. Be located in diverse locations around the city with good pedestrian and transit access.

639_ Create and implement strategies to manage pests, disease, invasive species, urban wildlife, and other threats to the production of food and the sustainability of our food system.