

Middlesex London Initial Food Policy Council

Terms of Reference

2016

Vision

The Middlesex London community sustains a healthy, safe, equitable and ecologically responsible food system, that nourishes all local residents and is economically viable.

Mission

The Middlesex London Food Policy Council will:

- Be a forum for discussing local food issues.
- Empower citizens to be involved in food system decisions.
- Foster coordination between sectors in the food system.
- Evaluate and influence policy.
- Support programs and services that address local needs.

Goal

To facilitate and support a safe, healthy and accessible local food system that is socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable.

Activities

Advocate – Identify policy changes which support goals and advocate for their implementation.

Communicate – Engage with the community on relevant and timely issues through the sharing of information and involvement in working groups.

Coordinate – Identify and prioritize emerging issues, opportunities and needs in the Middlesex London food system and support the creation and implementation of initiatives.

Educate – Provide evidence-based research and the most current knowledge on local food systems issues.

Evaluate – Establish benchmarks and targets for achievement of mission/goals and monitor and report on progress of implementation.

Leverage – Align and seek community resources to support the mission and goals of the Food Policy Council.

Research - To facilitate, or conduct research on emerging local food system priorities where information gaps exist.

Network – Build new partnerships and facilitate networking between existing and emerging food system stakeholders in Middlesex London.

Values

Members of the Middlesex London Food Policy Council are committed to achieving the following in our community:

- *Accountability*- Accountable to citizens of Middlesex London.
- *Community and Partnership* – Inclusivity, sharing responsibility, and working together will improve the food system and benefit all.
- *Diversity* – Our communities celebrate the culture and diversity of food
- *Equity* – All people have equitable access to healthy, local and culturally appropriate food.
- *Health and Well Being*- All citizens have opportunities for optimal physical and mental health.
- *Respect* – The perspectives and contributions of everyone in the food system - including those farming, processing, distributing, cooking, and eating food are respected and valued.
- *Sustainability* – There is a reliable, secure, economically viable, ecologically and socially responsible food system and a sustained commitment to a local Food Policy Council.
- *Transparency* – People have a right to know what's in their food, where and how it is produced and what is being discussed within the Food Policy Council.

NOTE: A set of operating principles will be drafted by the Food Policy Council when formed.

Membership

The Middlesex London Food Policy Council has a maximum of **20** members who represent both the county and the city. Members must live or work in London or Middlesex County. Membership reflects diverse interests from across the entire food system, ideally with representation from each of the following sectors:

- Agriculture (2 positions- urban, rural; small and large farm)
- City of London Council*
- City of London Municipal Staff (e.g., Planning, Social Services)*

- Economic Development/Community Futures
- Education
- Food Distribution and Logistics
- Food Processing
- Food Retail
- Food Security
- Food Service/Institutional Food/Food Procurement
- General Community Member (2;one county, one city); (Priority given to populations not represented by other member positions e.g., older adults, youth, newcomers)
- Indigenous Communities
- Middlesex County Council*
- Middlesex County Municipal Staff (e.g., Planning, Social Services)*
- Middlesex-London Board of Health*
- OMAFRA (Provincial Agricultural Group)*
- Research
- Energy, Environment and Waste

*Member to be appointed by representative organization

The Council's membership should reflect Middlesex London's diverse population, including, but not limited to, race, rural/urban residency, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Members must endorse the mission, goals, and values of the Council and have skills or experience in at least one area of food system issues. Members are expected to participate in a least one Project Group in addition to their commitment to attend all regular full Council meetings.

Governance Model

The Middlesex London Food Policy Council will operate using the model below, incorporating three levels of involvement. The start-up council will operate as a collaborative and decisions on corporate structure of the Food Policy Council will be determined at a later date once the council is formed.

Level 1: Food Policy Council Member

- Includes key community decision-makers

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Set direction on food system change,
- Take positions on food issues and advocate for change,
- Develop strategies for bringing about food system change,
- Writing and advising on policy,

- Provide leadership (i.e. attending events, speaking on behalf of the Council, etc.),
- Discuss food issues,
- Leverage relationships,
- Determine the process for the formation of the project groups and topics utilizing the results of the Community Food Assessment as a starting point,
- Oversees governance and structure overall (planning, Terms of Reference, accountability, adherence to regulations, etc.),
- Determine where to apply for funding as needed.

Level 2: Action Group Participant

- Includes individuals from the FPC and those identified by the members of the FPC as participants.
- Participants in Action Groups are those who want to “do” and “implement” food projects, Community Food Assessment priorities, grass root initiatives (community participation)

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Education
- Action
- Quick wins
- Facilitation

Level 3: General Public

- Includes individuals who want to stay informed

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Help to inform direction
- Attend public events and meetings

Executive Committee

The executive committee will be composed of a chair, vice chair, trustee and secretary. Note taking and other administrative duties will be performed by the coordinator.

Action Groups:

Topic specific Action Groups will be composed of participants and at least one Council member. Each Action Group will have one Food Policy Council member to liaise with the Council and report on progress the Action Group is making in key areas. Action Groups will correspond to identified priority areas of the Food Policy Council and will be struck as needed by the Council to implement planned activities in key areas.

Selection Process For Initial Food Policy Council

An open call for applications will be made. Applicants will apply to represent one or more of the sector membership categories. Applicants will provide a reference, and indicate their area of expertise, and other relevant skills required of a Food Policy Council member.

An Application Review committee will determine eligible applicants based on a matrix including diversity and desired skill-sets, which will be used to guide decision making for initial Food Policy Council appointees

Application Review Committee:

Will include 5 representatives from food system stakeholders and the community at large that have been involved in work to date on food policy council creation. Middlesex London Health Unit and London Food Bank will provide administrative support for the review committee process. Review committee members may recruit from the community for Food Policy Council applicants. Application review and appointment of initial FPC members to be completed by early Fall, 2016. *Members may, but are not expected to, formally represent or speak for their organizations, but will be selected on the basis of their ability to speak to issues from the food sector or key interest area they come from.*

Future Appointments to Food Policy Council

Details to be determined by the Food Policy Council members once they are in place.

Term

Members are appointed for a two-year term with the possibility of one term of renewal. Appointments will be staggered to ensure continuity between terms. New members will be recruited and appointed on an annual basis at the annual meeting.

Decision Making

Consensus is the preferred method of decision-making. When consensus is not reached, a vote will be taken, as long as quorum is met (50% + 1).

Quorum is defined as 50% of the **current** membership and 50+1 is required for day-to-day decisions. Two /thirds agreement of Council members are required for positions of advocacy.

The Chairperson only votes in the event of a tie.

Meeting Frequency

The Food Policy Council will meet up to 8 times per year. Dates and times to be agreed upon by Council members. Meetings will alternate between City and County locations. The Annual Meeting will be open to the public.

Resources Staff

A Middlesex-London Health Unit Registered Dietitian, knowledgeable in community food systems and food security, will provide coordination support to the Food Policy Council. This position is 0.25 FTE. The dietitian will attend all full Food Policy Council meetings, but will not have voting rights. Dietitian responsibility includes minute taking if needed, providing evidence support for decisions and coordination with Chair on other meeting requirements. Administrative responsibilities to be shared with another organization. The London Food Bank, acting in the capacity of Trustee (e.g. financial manager) will also provide support to the Food Policy Council as an ex-officio member. They will attend and participate at meetings and assist in the administration of the council but will not have voting rights.

Resource allocation and responsibilities are to be re-visited within 1 year of FPC formation.

Review and Approval of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference shall be reviewed and approved by the Food Policy Council every two years.

Date Approved

Approved at community forum May 5, 2016.
Final revisions made May 20, 2016.

DEFINITIONS/GLOSSARY

**The Food System is an interconnected network of practices, processes and places that cover all aspects of food. The six components of the food system are: Food Production, Food Processing, Food Distribution, Food Access, Food Consumption, Food Education and Waste Management (Food Policy Council, City of Vancouver).*

**A sustainable food system is one that provides healthy food to meet current food needs while maintaining healthy ecosystems that can also provide food for generations to come with minimal negative impact to the environment. A sustainable food system also encourages local production and distribution infrastructures and makes nutritious food available, accessible, and affordable to*

all. Further, it is humane and just, protecting farmers and other workers, consumers, and communities (American Public Health Association).

Local food economy is the economic activity surrounding the activities of the local food system. The local food system includes all people, activities and resources needed to feed the people in a given area. This includes everything needed to grow, process, package, distribute, consume and dispose of food (Middlesex-London Community Food Assessment).

Community Food Assessment is a participatory and collaborative process engaged in by members of a community who are interested in exploring their community's food system strengths and issues (Middlesex-London Community Food Assessment).

Food Policy Councils connect diverse people from the food, farming and community sector to develop innovative policies and projects that support a health-focused food system. Food Policy Councils are a forum for action across the food system and serve as a coordinated approach to food policy issues (Food Policy Council, City of Toronto).

Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems (International Forum for Food Sovereignty, Declaration of the Forum for Food Sovereignty).