

Toronto Food Policy Archive

Food Policy Decisions in Toronto

Spring 2015

Toronto Food Policy Archive

Toronto is a municipal food policy leader, with a long history working to ensure access to healthy, affordable, sustainable and culturally acceptable food. Major highlights in Toronto food legislation include establishment of the Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC), FoodShare, Student Nutrition Programs, the Toronto Food Charter and the Toronto Food Strategy.

There have also been many important decisions the City of Toronto has made regarding food policy and many currently under consideration.

Food Policy and Governance

- Toronto Food Policy Council
- Toronto Food Charter
- Greater Golden Horseshoe Alliance
- Toronto Food Strategy
- Healthy Cities, Healthy Public Policy

Access to Healthy Food

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- Student Nutrition Programs
- Food Justice Day Proclamation
- Community kitchens

Nutrition

- Recreation Centre Soda Ban (not passed)
- Nutritious Food Basket
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- Food Advertising to Children
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Economic Development

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- Creation of Food and Beverage Sector Specialist
- Toronto Food Business Incubator

Inter-jurisdictional Advocacy

- Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)

Waste Management

- Food waste

Timeline of Toronto Food Policy Decisions

- 1985 – Food Share Established
- 1991 – Toronto Food Policy Council Established
- 2001 – City council adopts Toronto Food Charter
- 2002 – Toronto's Official Plan includes language about the importance of the local/regional food system
- 2005 – City of Toronto budget allocates funds towards food security
- 2009 – Green roof bylaw adopted by City Council
- 2010 – Toronto Food Strategy Established
- 2011 – Healthy Toronto by Design report
- 2011 – City supports the GrowTO Speaker Series
- 2012 – City Council endorses the Greater Golden Horseshoe Action Plan
- 2012 – GrowTO Urban Agriculture Action Plan created and endorsed by City Council
- 2012 – Toronto Board of Health endorsed net increase of funding for Student Nutrition Programs
- 2015 – Street food vending bylaw update
- 2015 – Toronto food incubator approved and funded

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Food Policy and Governance

Toronto Food Policy Council

Toronto Food Charter

Greater Golden Horseshoe Alliance

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Healthy Cities, Healthy Public Policy

Toronto Food Policy Council

Background:

In 1988, it was recognized that the City of Toronto required a local food policy council to inform City Council on food issues and comprehensively address hunger and poverty. The Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC) was first established in 1991, as a subcommittee of the Toronto Board of Health, to advise the City of Toronto on food policy issues. The TFPC is now administratively situated within Toronto Public Health.

The TFPC provides an opportunity for action across the food system. TFPC members identify emerging food issues that will impact Torontonians, promote food system innovation, and facilitate food policy development. The TFPC works closely with Toronto Public Health's Food Strategy team as a community reference group, with a focus on identifying emerging issues, facilitating linkages between the community, Toronto Public Health and City Divisions, and advising the food strategy team on their implementation process.

TFPC proudly supports the [Toronto Youth Food Policy Council \(TYFPC\)](#), which provides youth with a space to engage, network, and learn from one another. The TYFPC has two permanent Youth seats on the TFPC.

Membership

The TFPC has up to 30 members, along with 1 full-time coordinator. Members include individuals from the Board of Health, City Councillors, the Toronto Youth Food Policy Council and individuals from farming communities in the Greater Toronto Area. 22 citizen members representing diverse food sectors also sit on the council. Members are appointed for three-year terms.

TFPC activities

- In partnership with Sustain Ontario, TFPC advocates for good food policies and a [Local Food Act](#) in Ontario.
- TFPC has provided support for the [Greater Golden Horseshoe Farm and Food Action Plan](#), which received endorsement from City Council.
- The TFPC and Food Strategy team partnered with Niagara-based Vineland Research and Innovation Centre to work on the "Feeding Diversity" project. A January 2012 report entitled, [Feeding Diversity: Community Access and Commercialization of World Crops](#), identifies strategies to make culturally appropriate vegetables more widely available in Toronto's underserved neighbourhoods, and aims to ultimately substitute these often imported products with locally grown versions.
- TFPC has been involved in the development of the [GrowTO Urban Agriculture Action Plan](#). The plan was endorsed unanimously by Toronto City Council on November 27th, 2012.
- The TFPC advocates for the expansion of street food options in Toronto and for creating new opportunities for new vendors and food trucks.
- The TFPC advocates for appropriate food waste management through promotion of mid-scale composting operation allowance within the City of Toronto. A report is under development on City of Toronto food waste, to address household and commercial food waste.
- The TFPC has been involved in the production of a Soil Assessment Guide and a Growing and Selling Guide for individuals interested in urban agriculture enterprises within the City of Toronto.

Toronto Food Charter

In 2001, City Council adopted the **Toronto Food Charter** which highlights the City's commitment to food security. The Toronto Food Charter has been implemented through a variety of strategies recommended through the **Toronto Board of Health**. The Toronto Food Charter was a result of The Food and Hunger Action Committee, started in December of 1999 and made up of Toronto City Councillors and advised by the Toronto Food Policy Council.

The first phase of this committee was outlined in the **Phase I report, "Planting the Seeds"**. The Toronto Food Charter was **unanimously adopted** by City Council along with the Phase II report from this committee called **"The Growing Season"**.

Greater Golden Horseshoe Alliance

Long-term food security means that we need farmland in and near the city. We must begin to account for the true cost of urban sprawl on Canada's prime agricultural lands.

The Toronto Food Policy Council has contributed to many planning consultative processes to try and moderate this sprawl on surrounding farmland including:

- Commission on Planning and Development Reform in Ontario (Sewell Commission)
- Ontario Bill 163 (Planning Act) and Comprehensive Set of Policy Statements, the Reformed Planning Act (Bill 20) and the new Provincial Policy Statement
- Report of the Greater Toronto Area Task Force (Golden Report)
- City of Toronto existing Official Plan, and draft Official Plan 2001
- City of Toronto Strategic Plan
- City of Toronto Environmental Task Force

Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance is a group that has come together to generate an action plan on how to tackle the issue of farmland protection and how the Golden Horseshoe region can continue to grow. [The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan: 2021](#) was adopted by Toronto City Council in April 2012 and financially endorsed by Toronto City Council. In [February 2013 City Council appointed Councillor Mary Fragedakis](#) to the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan Alliance. This alliance involves a number of high level political influences, like the City Councillor appointed but also involves a City Staff Working Group involving members of the City Planning Department, Economic Development Department, and Toronto Food Strategy/ Toronto Food Policy Council. This staff working group was directed under [the recommendations of the Economic Development Committee to City Council](#) in February 2014 to implement specific actions under the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, 2021.

Also in line with farmland protection surrounding the GTA [Toronto City Council endorsed the Food and Water First](#) campaign based on a [motion by Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Mary-Margaret McMahon](#).

Toronto Food Strategy

The Toronto Food Strategy initiated through a report entitled, "The State of Toronto's Food: Discussion Paper for a Toronto Food Strategy", which was **presented to the Toronto Board of Health in June 2008**. The goal of the Toronto Food Strategy team was to "develop an action plan to improve the food system to better support good nutrition, healthy development and disease prevention, poverty reduction and social justice, a strong local economy, environmental protection and climate change action, and the promotion and celebration of culture and community through food." Meeting these goals inherently requires the staff of the Toronto Food Strategy to coordinate and collaborate across City departments and divisions.

In 2010, the Toronto Food Strategy produced a report entitled, "**Cultivating Food Connections: Toward a Healthy and Sustainable Food System for Toronto**".

The report recommends that the City Manager request all City Divisions, Agencies, Board and Commissions, to identify and implement opportunities to embed food system initiatives in City policies and programs. It also provides numerous examples of actions that the City of Toronto can take, in active partnership with residents, community organizations and businesses, categorized according to the following six areas:

- Support food friendly neighbourhoods
- Make food a centerpiece of Toronto's new green economy
- Eliminate hunger in Toronto
- Connect city and countryside through food
- Empower residents with food skills and information
- Urge federal and provincial governments to establish health-focused food policies

The actions are weighted toward those which can leverage existing resources and optimize the use of the City's already-paid-for assets.

Working alongside the Toronto Food Policy Council, the Food Strategy team hopes to inspire innovation to unlock food's potential to enable personal health, vibrant neighbourhoods and a great city.

The Toronto Food Strategy **current projects** include:

- Aggregated Food Procurement
 - "Increasing the nutritional quality of foods served in community and social service agencies while offering cost-reductions"
- Healthy Corner Stores
 - "Expanding access to fresh, healthy food and revitalizing Toronto's convenience store sector"
- Community Food Works
 - "A unique approach to food safety, nutrition and employment training for low-income communities"
- Mobile Good Food Market
 - "Finding new ways to make healthy, affordable food available across the City"
- Locally Grown World Crops
 - "Growing the world's foods in our own backyard"
- Food Retail Environment Mapping
 - "Mapping access to healthy food across Toronto"

Healthy Cities, Healthy Public Policy

In 2011, the report [Healthy Toronto by Design](#) was created, which outlines the impact of an urban environment on health and the role of local governments in fostering a healthy city. The report's recommendations were [adopted with amendments by the Board of Health](#).

The [Unequal City 2015](#) report, the first report to analyze health equity changes over time in Toronto, outlines the relationship between income and health and examines health inequities that exist for low income individuals in Toronto.

Access to Healthy Food

Food Share

Student Nutrition Programs

Food Justice Day Proclamation

Community kitchens

FoodShare

FoodShare is a non-profit organization established in 1985. Through their work with schools and communities, they deliver nutritious surplus food, provide food education and establish innovative programs to improve healthy food access in Toronto. FoodShare was initiated by 1985 Toronto Mayor Art Eggleton's \$20,000 pilot program to address hunger in Toronto by providing emergency food aid through management of surplus food donations and emergency food drives.

View FoodShare's founding document from the City of Toronto – a 1985 letter to the City's Executive Committee titled "[A Concept to Help Fight Hunger in Toronto](#)".

FoodShare's initial key services were to:

- 1) Establish the Hunger Hotline (years later renamed [FoodLink](#)), a phone service to inform people about the emergency food programs that would best meet their needs
- 2) Research the causes of increased hunger and food bank use to provide Toronto City Council with recommendations for action.

In 1986, FoodShare began advocating for long-term solutions to hunger by lobbying to address the social inequities that can affect food access.

FoodShare started the Food Action Project, and in 1986 was successful in getting first a Federal then a Provincial grant to do this work. In 1989, the Food Action Project was launched, with support from federal funding to help residents organize community gardens, dinners, and bulk buying clubs, organize trips to farmers markets and 'U-Pick' farms, community run restaurants, and create a shopping directory of budget stores.

The Toronto Food Policy Council developed a feasibility study for a not-for-profit healthy food delivery system for Toronto's low-income citizens. Operational control of the "Field to Table" program was assumed by FoodShare in 1992. It provides affordable, nourishing, regionally-sourced food to 15,000 people each month.

Today FoodShare operates a large number of programs including student nutrition programs, educational workshops, a mid-scale composting facility, mobile good food markets, cooking programs, and community engagement events. For details visit: <http://www.foodshare.net/>

Student Nutrition Programs

"Student nutrition programs provide healthy meals and snacks to children and youth. Every day, 160,000 Toronto students participate in these breakfast, snack and lunch programs" (1)

In 1991, to address the hunger of students at inner city schools, the Coalition for Student Nutrition was formed by Toronto City Councilor Jack Layton, his executive assistant Dan Leckie, Metro Councillor Dale Martin, his executive assistant Debbie Field, School Trustees Olivia Chow and Pam McConnell, and community groups like FoodShare (2).

Fiona Knight, a FoodShare community outreach worker, advocated for nutrition programs for all students cost shared by the community, government and parents rather than a program targeted to students from low-income families. These recommendations were adopted by the Coalition for Student Nutrition, which helped to create the model for school food programs across Canada. The Toronto Food Policy Council and FoodShare have worked with the Student Nutrition Coalition to expand school food programs in the City from 53 to 350. They also helped to persuade the provincial government to fund student nutrition programs (2).

In 2012 the Medical Officer of Health issued a report entitled, [Nourishing Young Minds - A Review of the Student Nutrition Program in Toronto](#). In September of 2012 the [Toronto Board of Health endorsed the net increase of funding](#) to municipal student nutrition programs for 2013 and endorsed in principle the proposed five year plan for stabilization of existing Student Nutrition Programs in Toronto, with an incremental increase in municipal investment over the next five years to provide up to 20% of estimated program costs. In October of 2012 a [staff report outlining priorities and a proposed expansion](#) of student nutrition programs in high needs schools from 2013 to 2017 was presented to the Board of Health and [endorsed](#). This increase in program funding has allowed for the expansion of student nutrition program across the city (2).

1. <http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=ecad946d1d592410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>
2. <http://www.foodshare.net/history1990-1994>

Food Justice Day Proclamation

Toronto's progress on food justice through the Toronto Food Charter and Food Strategy projects and commitment to improving dignified and equitable access to healthy food for Torontonians was celebrated through a **proclamation** of May 5, 2015 as Food Justice Day in the City of Toronto.

Food justice exists when disparities in access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food and inequities in the food system are eliminated. As food access gaps continue to exist in the City of Toronto, there is still work to be done.

Community kitchens

Community kitchens involve a coming together of people to prepare a meal together. Many community kitchens exist in Toronto community centres, schools, churches, and community housing buildings.

More information on community kitchens and where they can be found in the City of Toronto at:

<http://www.foodshare.net/community-kitchens>

<http://pushfoodforward.com/kitchens>

Community kitchens at Toronto Community Housing Buildings:

http://www.torontohousing.ca/webfm_send/210/1

Those who may wish to start a community kitchen but without the available setting can rent a kitchen at:

<http://alimentaryinitiatives.com/hot-kitchens-to-rent/>

Nutrition

Recreation Centre Soda Ban (not passed)

Nutritious Food Basket

Diabetes Prevention Strategy

Food Advertising to Children

Menu labeling

Soda Ban from Recreation Centres (not passed)

In 2005, Toronto City Council considered including provisions for a healthy cold drink vending machine criteria in the City's next RFP process through the Government Management Committee. This change would mean that only milk, juice, and water would be provided instead of soda and energy drinks in vending machines found at City parks and recreation facilities. In 2010, City Council followed up on the agenda item entitled, "**Healthy Vending Criteria – Cold Drink Vending Request for Proposal**", extended the existing vending contract, and **referred the recommendation** back to the Government Management Committee for further information about the health impacts. Finally, in 2011, **City Council voted** to limit healthy vending options to 50% instead of exercising a **complete ban**.

Nutritious Food Basket

Food insecurity is a major issue in Toronto and can be impacted significantly by policies that limit household financial resources available for nutritious food.

In 2013, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care presented a report to the board of health. That, derived from a reported increase in the cost of a Nutritious Food Basket in Toronto, recommends government action to improve food security in Toronto.

The Nutritious Food Basket is used as a food costing survey tool to monitor the cost of healthy eating. The cost takes into account: eating patterns based on Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide and patterns of food purchasing determined by Canadian Community Healthy Survey 2.2 results. According to the 2013 Nutritious Food Basket results, the cost of eating healthy increased for a family of four in Toronto by 4% from the previous year.

The Board of Health encouraged the Premier of Ontario to raise social assistance rates to reflect the cost of nutritious food, requested the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care act on the recommendations outlined in the implementation plan of **No Time to Wait: The Healthy Kids Strategy** and forwarded the report (September 16, 2013) from the Medical Officer of Health to various government officials and local, provincial and national groups and organizations representing food and health.

Nutritious Food Basket Report from the Board of Health

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.HL24.4>

Diabetes Prevention Strategy

Diabetes is a rapidly growing disease in Canada and represents a major challenge to public health. Those living in poverty and with poor socioeconomic status are at an increased risk for development of type-2 diabetes and related complications. Toronto Public Health (TPH) has many programs and services in various settings aimed at addressing risk factors for chronic diseases including type-2 diabetes.

Toronto Public Health has been actively participating in Provincial discussions to address prevention of childhood obesity and Type-2 diabetes in relation to recent provincial funding announcements. In 2007, the Board of Health recommended the Medical Officer of Health report on the diabetes status in Toronto, current TPH programs to address diabetes, and further opportunities for prevention initiatives. This [staff report](#) was presented to the Board of Health in 2008.

Decision Documents:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.HL22.3>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2008.HL17.3>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2007.HL10.6>

Food Advertising to Children

Food advertising can have a strong impact on children because of their limited ability to decipher marketing strategies.

In 2008, Toronto's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David McKeown, was an expert presenter at the "Obesity and the Impact of Marketing on Children" conference organized by the Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada in Ottawa. Dr. McKeown advocated the Board of Health's position of a national ban on the commercial advertising of food and beverages to children under thirteen years of age. The full ban has not yet been established federally.

In 2010, the Board of Health requested that the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) commit to prohibiting their advertising from targeting children under 13 years old.

From:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2010.HL28.2>

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2010/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-27182.pdf>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2008.HL13.1>

Menu labelling

Menu labels inform diners of restaurants and foodservice establishments about the nutrition information of menu choices. It can be difficult for consumers to estimate the levels of certain nutrients in their food choices and they may be unaware of the calorie and sodium levels in menu options. Menu labelling is well supported by many healthcare providers and organizations.

In 2013, it was announced that, in consultation with diverse sectors, the provincial government will introduce menu labelling legislation that would require large chain restaurants to display calorie information (with other nutrition information) on their menus/menu boards. Toronto Public Health was represented at the consultations. The Medical Officer of Health's suggestions included recommendation that sodium levels should be posted alongside calorie information and that public education (on how to use menu labels) should accompany the legislation. As the provincial government has committed to this legislation, TPH has halted advancement of creating a municipal menu labelling bylaw.

Decision Documents:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-57582.pdf>

Board of Health Presentation: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-57581.pdf>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.HL21.2>

Adopted: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.HL27.5>

Rural Urban Linkages

Farmers Markets

Farmer's markets

Since 1803 farmer's markets have been present in Toronto on a formal or informal basis (1). The Toronto Food policy Council has been involved in advocating for the creation of farmers' markets across the city in public parks and at community centres since its inception. Between 2009 and 2013 the number of farmers' markets in Toronto grew by 30% (2). This follows a province wide trend of increasing the number of farmers' markets. In [Ontario](#) the number of farmers' markets has grown from 60 to 180 since the early 1990s.

In Toronto, the sale of food requires a specific license and farmers' markets must meet strict Public Health guidelines. In 2006 a staff report was issued to the Toronto Board of Health about the [Amendments to Ontario Food Safety Regulations Exempting Farmers' Markets](#). This allows for certain exemptions to food safety rules that otherwise govern the sale of food in grocery stores or restaurants. These exemptions allow for a more flexible definition of a "food premise" under the Food Premises Regulation outlined by the Board of Health and allow farmers to sell products grown on their farm or to sell food produced in a commercial kitchen.

[The Toronto Farmers' Market Network](#) provides a list of farmers' markets in Toronto, as well as links to local food resources and publications about farmers' markets. The [Livegreen Toronto Map](#) offers a virtual map with the option to view the locations of farmers markets in the City.

1. Doug Taylor's, The Villages Within
2. Toronto Vital Signs Report, 2013

Community Gardening and Urban Agriculture

Community Gardens

Urban Agriculture

Urban Hens

School Gardens

Community Gardens

The Toronto Food Policy Council led the effort for a community gardening strategy in Toronto, resulting in an expansion from 50 community gardens in 1991 to 122 in 2001. Representatives from the Toronto Food Policy Council chaired the Interdepartmental Working Group that crafted "Supports for Urban Food Production: Creating a Garden City, 1993." The Community Gardens Program (CGP) in the City of Toronto was initiated in 1997 through a partnership with FoodShare and the Toronto Food Policy Council. The TFPC also helped to coordinate GROW T.O.GETHER Community Gardeners, and its successor, the [Toronto Community Gardening Network \(TCGN\)](#).

It was a suggestion of the [TCGN](#) that Toronto's City Council adopt the [1999 Community Garden Action Plan](#) that calls for the creation of a community garden in a park in every ward. Since that time TCGN members have received support from [Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation](#). By working together TCGN and Parks, Forestry and Recreation have created a supportive climate for community gardening that is looked to as a model by groups and municipalities across the country and abroad.

Toronto City Council has endorsed the recommendation of the [Environmental Task Force](#) encouraging the Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division to advance Community Gardens in City Parks and other City-owned lands. The City of Toronto has compiled resources for the [implementation of community gardens, allotment gardens, and children's gardens](#).

The City built on this range of programs in 2004 through a report called [Our Common Grounds](#) which initiated a professional gardener certificate program. Toronto Parks and Recreation currently maintains 54 community garden sites on City parkland. Between 2009 and 2013, 16 new community gardens were created, an increase of 41% (Toronto Vital Signs Report, 2013).

In 2013 [Toronto Public Health](#) and the TFPC launched [From the Ground Up: Assessing the Risks and Maximizing the Benefits of Gardening on Urban Soils](#). This is an easy-to-use guide for people wanting to start food gardens in the city.

The full staff report is entitled: *Assessing Urban Impacted Soil for Urban Gardening: Decision Support Tool Technical Report and Rationale*.

Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture has been vibrant within the City of Toronto long before there have been formalized structures to support and expand production. The [Toronto Community Garden Network](#) has been an active community for urban growers for decades. In the past several years, however, The City of Toronto has started to recognize the need to acknowledge the growing urban agriculture movement in Toronto and encourage its expansion. In March of 2000 the TFPC initiated and organised the first "North American Conference on Urban Agriculture". This conference brought together 100 participants who heard from civic officials, economic development officers, growers, brokers and buyers.

In 2007 local food production was identified as a factor in the [Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainability Energy Action Plan](#), which was unanimously adopted by City Council.

In May of 2009 a [staff report](#) was submitted to the Parks and Environment Committee entitled: [Identifying Urban Agriculture Opportunities in the City of Toronto](#). This report followed a [panel of experts in the field of urban agriculture](#) who were invited to make presentations to the Committee to discuss urban food production and how the City of Toronto can best support the urban agriculture movement while considering important constraints and opportunities.

In 2012 a number of Toronto food and environmental organizations collaborated to produce the [GrowTO Urban Agriculture Action Plan](#) for the City of Toronto. The process for creating this report was through four moderated discussions and two action-planning sessions to delve into the issues and create this document. GrowTO was presented to the Parks and Environment Committee and then adopted by [City Council in November 2012](#). The GrowTO Action Plan became the basis for the [Toronto Agricultural Program](#) which was first discussed at the Parks and Environment Committee Meeting in October of 2013 and then to [City Council in November 2013](#). The Toronto Agricultural Program sets out ways to implement the scaling up of urban agriculture initiatives across the city and sets out a workplan to do so. This workplan is geared by the Toronto Agricultural Program joint City-Sector Steering Committee that meets regularly to discuss the implementation, next steps, and challenges.

One of the most successful urban agriculture projects in Toronto so far is the establishment of the [Black Creek Community Farm](#). In 2002 the [Toronto Region Conservation Authority](#) requested support from the Controlled Goods Program to implement Urban Farm concept. In 2003 they received funding from the Ontario Works Incentive Fund to establish an urban farm over two-year pilot period. In 2007 [Toronto City Council approved a base operating budget](#) for what was then called the Toronto Urban Farm initiative in the Jane/Finch neighbourhood. In 2013 [Black Creek Community Farm](#) undertook its first growing season and will continue to be a model for other urban agriculture initiatives across the city.

This farm has been built through collaboration between:

- [Everdale](#)
- [Fresh City Farms](#)
- [FoodShare](#)
- [Afri-Can Food Basket](#)
- [Black Creek Community Health Centre](#)
- [Toronto Public Health](#)
- [Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre](#)
- [Driftwood Community Centre](#)

- The Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University
- Green Change
- Toronto Region Conservation Authority

Urban Hens

In 2011 City Councillors proposed a **motion** to undertake a feasibility study to determine the impact of allowing backyard hens in Toronto. This motion called for a report to be given to the **Licensing and Standards Committee** about the feasibility of allowing residents to keep a limited number of chickens in their backyards in response to the growing urban agriculture movement in the city.

When the motion went to the **Licensing and Standards Committee in January of 2012** the vote was carried to defer this item indefinitely thereby defeating the motion and halting the feasibility study before it could be undertaken.

School Gardens

Available land on schools grounds provide a setting where students can learn, through hands-on experience, where food comes from and how it is grown. An example of a school market garden where students are actively involved is the one-acre school market garden at Bendale Business and Technical Institute with FoodShare.

The Toronto District School Board enthusiastically supports many school based community gardens.

There are several initiatives in partnership with the Toronto District School Board or who have received funding from the City of Toronto:

[Imagine a garden in every school](#)

[Green Thumbs Growing Kids](#)

[FoodShare Field to Table – 2006 partnership with Toronto Public Health](#)

[Live Green Funding for School Garden Projects](#)

Toronto Public Health Programs

Healthy Environments

Healthy Communities

Healthy Families

Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention

Healthy Public Policy

Healthy Environments

Food Inspection Program

Toronto's food inspection program, called DineSafe, inspects all food establishments and gives a pass, conditional pass, or closed notice.

Food Handler Certification Training

City Council passed a bylaw in 2006 requiring Food Handler certification for at least one certified Food Handler working in a supervisory role at all times in any premises where food is prepared, processed, served, packaged or stored. Toronto Public Health offers Food Handler Certification Courses.

Home Food Safety Campaign

The Toronto Public Health Home Food Safety Campaign advocates, promoting safe food practices in the home.

Healthy Communities

Toronto Food Strategy

Toronto Food Policy Council

Healthy Families

Healthiest Babies Possible Program

The Healthiest Babies Possible Program is a prenatal nutrition program that offers pregnant women one-to-one counselling with a Registered Dietitian.

Peer Nutrition Program

The Peer Nutrition Program offers parents and caregivers of young children (6months-6years) nutrition education led by Community Nutrition Educators and supported by Registered Dietitians.

Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention

Student Nutrition Program

Nutritious Food Basket

Healthy Public Policy

Advertising and Marketing for Kids

Market Gardens on Hydro Corridors

Savvy Diner

Savvy Diner is a Toronto Public Health campaign that advocates for restaurant menu labelling.

Funding and Community Support

Community Food Funds
Live Green Funding

Community Food Funds

The 2005 City of Toronto budget allocated funds towards building up Food Security and Community Development initiatives within the city. The 2005 Approved Budget for the **Community Partnership and Investment Program** included an allocation for two new service areas: \$300,000 for Food Security and \$250,000 for Service Development.

This initiative was produced out of a **grant request** to support food and hunger initiatives made in 2004 to the Community Services Committee and came out of recommendations made in The Food and Hunger Action Committee's 2001 Phase II report "The Growing Season".

The food security portion of this funding was to be directed towards:

1. Community gardens, community markets and community kitchens in high needs communities.
2. Community co-ordination and animation to build capacity for addressing needs in new areas.
3. Short term projects that demonstrate innovations in the delivery of programs that address food security.

Livegreen Funding

Since 2008, Livegreen Toronto operated a grant program that provided funding to organizations to help fund project specific goals. The grant program is divided into two streams, the Community Investment Program Fund (that funded up to \$25,000 for each project selected) and the Capital Grants Program (that provided between \$25,000 to \$150,000). For 2008, City Council approved funding of \$200,000 for the Community Investment Program to build capacity within local communities and neighbourhoods to identify, develop and initiate actions that will reduce greenhouse gas and smog-causing emissions; and \$500,000 for the Capital Projects Fund to help implement capital asset projects that result in significant reductions in emissions and which the local community has identified and is engaged in supporting. In 2009, Live Green Toronto funding for community based green initiatives increased to \$2.2 million.

This grant program had a significant impact on the food community within Toronto and a number of organizations received beneficial funding.

These organizations include:

Afri-Can Food Basket for "Cultivating Youth Leadership Urban Farm Project"
The Compost Council of Canada: Plant a Row-Grow a Row Presents Soup-a-Licious!
Friends of Christie Pits Park (sponsor: Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre): Urban Agriculture, Forestry and Sustainable Neighbourhoods Education Series
Greenest City Environmental Organization: Growing the Future
Local Food Plus, Eating Our Way to a Better Environment-The Local Food Plus Approach
Not Far From the Tree (sponsoring org: Popular Education Research Catalyst Centre): Mapping, Tapping and Organizational Recapping
PACT Pack Urban Peace Program (Sponsoring org: Canadian Foundation for the Prevention of Family Violence): Schoolyard Garden and Urban Agriculture Program
The Social Phobia Support Group of Toronto (sponsor: Foodshare): Growing People Growing Food
The Stop Community Food Centre: Green Barn Neighbourhood Urban Agriculture Hub and Yes In My Backyard (YIMBY)
SOY (Seniors Organization of York) York West Active Living Centre: SOY Garden Party
Carrot Cache: Carrot Cache Sustainable Roof Garden Project
Toronto Green Community: Container Gardening Train-the-Trainer
Working Women Community Centre (Oriole Peanut Community Garden): Community Greenhouse and Fruit Orchard
Growing for Green: Ben Nobleman Park Community Orchard (Local Food)
Hincks-Dellcrest Centre: Grow Our Own (Local Food)
North York Harvest Food Bank: Harvest to Hand Community Garden (Local Food)
Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care: Healthy Eating & Growing Up Green (Local Food)
Urban Agriculture Society: Urban Ag Society Pilot Garden (Local Food)
Women's Habitat of Etobicoke: WH Green Thumbs Initiative (Local Food)
Access Alliance: Crescent Town Community Health Centre and Social Service Hub (Green Roof/ Local Food/Energy)
Evergreen: Growing Food at Home
Green Thumbs Growing Kids: Raised Bed and Rain Harvest Construction Project
The Garden Party: The Garden Party
Greenest City (\$25,000) for a project called "From the Ground Up,"

Not Far From the Tree (\$25,000) for a volunteer-driven fruit tree harvesting project
FoodShare's "Over the Top" project
Stop Community Food Centre (\$100,000) for their "Green Barn"
FoodCycles (\$35,087) for their "Downsview Park Greenhouse" project

Environmental Sustainability

Local Food Procurement
Green Roof Bylaw

Local Food Procurement

In 1999, The Environmental Task Force with the City of Toronto issued **recommendations** to City Council, based on a report from the Toronto Food Policy Council, to increase the amount of local food procured by food service providers within City agencies.

In 2000 this was reiterated in an environmental plan by the Environmental Task Force, **Clean, Green and Healthy - A Plan for an Environmentally Sustainable Toronto**, where procurement of food within urban areas was also called for in addition to a number of recommendations to foster the local food movement within the City.

In 2011 The Toronto Environment Office issued a **Staff Report on Local Food Procurement** to the Government Management Committee at the City of Toronto with a general pledge to increase local food procurement within the City in alignment with the goals of the Province.

Toronto Green Roof Bylaw

Toronto is the first City in North America to have a **bylaw** that requires and governs the construction of green roofs on new developments. It was adopted by Toronto City Council in May 2009, under the authority of Section 108 of the City of Toronto Act. The Bylaw applies to new building permit applications for residential, commercial and institutional development made after January 31, 2010 and applies to new industrial development as of April 30, 2012.

The Toronto Food Policy Council helped to initiate the City Hall Green Roof project in 1999. Some research has been done on how this green roof bylaw in Toronto can be used to encourage rooftop food production, including mention in the **GrowTO: Urban Agriculture Action Plan**.

Follow the links below for additional information:

<http://www.foodshare.net/news/the-nuts-and-bolts-of-urban-agriculture-and-green-roofs/>

Film: <http://terracommunis.wordpress.com/watch-the-film/>

Economic Development

Street Food

Creation of a Food and Beverage Sector Specialist Position

Toronto Food Business Incubator

Street Food

Street food vending in Toronto has gone through several phases in the last several years.

2007

In April 2007 a motion was put to the Toronto Board of Health to ask for [provincial food safety regulations to be amended](#), without being compromised, to allow for a broader range of street food that is healthy, affordable and culturally diverse. In response to the July 2007 amendment by the Province to Regulation 562 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act allowing street food vendors to vend a wider variety of foods, the City took action to delay the sale of expanded street food items until City Council had the opportunity to consider how such changes should be implemented. In late 2007 a submission was made to the Municipal Licensing and Standards Committee to [change Chapter 315 of the Municipal Code](#) to alter street food vending regulations.

2008-2009

In [January of 2008 City Council endorsed a small-scale street food pilot project](#) across the city for the summer of 2008 to introduce the sale of safe, healthy, nutritious and ethnically-diverse foods and evaluate the commercial viability of the proposed program. This small pilot called for Requests for Expressions of Interest from citizens interested in participating. In June of 2008 the Executive Committee [referred the pilot project implementation to the Board of Health](#). [By December of 2008 City Council adopted an official Toronto Street Food Pilot Project](#) based on the staff report that was issued in May of 2008. This pilot project involved implementation by Toronto Public Health, in consultation with Legal Services and the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division, of a one-year pilot project with eligible existing street food vendors to expand their menu selection to include healthier food choices. It also involved the launch of a three-year “Toronto a la Cart” pilot project. The project was approved for up to fifteen vendors and was implemented in May 2009 with eight vendors with standardized carts. During the first two seasons of operation, a number of operational, administrative and other issues impacting the program became evident. [Fee adjustments, new locations and modifications to the regulations governing this initiative were made in 2010 in an effort to address issues identified during the first season.](#)

2010

When administrative responsibility for the project was transferred to the Economic Development & Culture Division in January 2010, City staff committed to undertaking a third-party program review at the end of the second vending season. [The result of this review was a report](#) that suggested that the Toronto A La Cart pilot project had not met its objectives, and no improvement could be made in the final year of the pilot. In addition, the review concluded that modifications to the regulatory framework for hot dog carts and mobile food trucks should be investigated if the City wished to pursue its objective of introducing healthier, more diverse street food.

2011-2012

In May of 2011 The “Toronto A La Cart” Program was shut down by City Council and the bylaw that allowed for this program was changed. The bylaw that dictated the sale of healthier food was also amended. In 2012 a review of the current regulations began with a Street Food Vending Working Group that reported to the Municipal Licensing and Standards Committee. In the first staff report the Working Group recommended amendments to existing bylaws that would allow street food vendors to expand their menu options.

2013-2014

In 2013 the Municipal Licensing and Standards Committee directed a public consultation on street food vending, which resulted in a report, entitled *New Opportunities for Toronto’s Street Food Vendors*, that was presented to the committee, and then to Council, in early 2014.

The result is the expansion of area in which street food vendors and food trucks are now allowed to operate across the city, with a greater diversity of menu options and new conditions for permitting and areas for parking. The moratorium on food trucks and street food vendors within the three downtown wards is still in effect but it is clear that great strides have been made in allowing for more diversity in street food options across the city.

2015

On May 5, 2015 City Council approved changes to street food vending regulations to allow food trucks to park within 30-metres (down from 50) of brick and mortar restaurants with bylaw *Chapter 740 Street Vending*.

Creation of a Food and Beverage Sector Specialist Position

The City of Toronto's current Food and Beverage Sector Specialist is Michael Wolfson. In his capacity as an industry advisor, Michael sits on the Greater Toronto Agricultural Action Committee, Ontario Culinary Tourism Steering Committee, and the Toronto Enviro-food Working Group. The Food and Beverage Sector Specialist partners with local stakeholders, organizations and governments on activities such as

- Advancing municipal issues related to food and beverage processors
- Consulting with the food industry
- Supporting members and programs of business networks (such as the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance)

More information available at:

<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vnextoid=67c4c1b5c62ca310VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&vnextchannel=401132d0b6d1e310VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

Toronto Food Business Incubator

Launched in 2007 and run by a not-for-profit board, **the Toronto Food Business Incubator** supports start-up food entrepreneurs in building their food business. The incubator provides access to a food production facility, business advice and consultations, and training on growing a food processing business.

<http://www.toronto.ca/311/knowledgebase/19/101000039319.html>

Inter-Jurisdictional Advocacy

Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)

Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)

The Government of Canada and the European Union have negotiated a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the participation of all provinces and territories. In February 2012 the Toronto Food Policy Council submitted a letter to the Toronto City Council Executive Committee about the implications of CETA for Toronto. At the same time a staff report was also written and delivered to the Executive Committee on the implications of CETA for Toronto and status of negotiations. This staff report was based on a motion by Councilor Glenn De Baeremaeker and seconded by Councilor Kristyn Wong-Tam to protect Toronto's interests from CETA that was referred by City Council to the Executive Committee. In March 2012 Toronto City Council voted for the province of Ontario to provide a permanent exemption from the Canada-EU free trade deal. This later led to a request to the province of Ontario by City Council in November 2013 to brief them on CETA.

Waste Management

Food Waste

Food Waste

The Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC) has been involved in several food waste reduction initiatives over the years. These include:

- Serving on the Steering Committee of the Ministry of Environment and Energy's Wet Waste Strategic Planning process.
- Participating in several community composting projects, such as Toronto Urban Nutrient Recovery Committee in the Broadview-Gerrard neighbourhood, and the Greenest City worm project in Kensington Market neighbourhood.
- Reporting to the Board of Health on a one-tonne per day pilot composting project, adopted by Works and Environment Department in 1997.
- Participating in the Metro Wet Waste sub-committee, resulting in six composting projects.

The TFPC is currently producing a report on food waste reduction for the City's long-term solid waste management strategy.