

Emergency Food and Nutrition Security Strategy City of Nanaimo Health and Housing Task Force October 1, 2020



Approved Working Group Guidelines

The two goals of the project:

- 1) To develop a food and nutrition security plan; including funding, procurement and distribution options to provide safe and consistent food for vulnerable individuals*, including those experiencing homelessness and seniors; and
- 2) To ensure that all Nanaimo residents have access to safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice.

**Vulnerable populations are groups and communities at a higher risk for poor health as a result of the barriers they experience to social, economic, political and environmental resources, as well as limitations due to illness or disability. In addition, in the context of a pandemic vulnerable populations may include infants and young children and women, seniors, students, people with compromised immune systems or chronic illness, disabled, and those experiencing homelessness*

Working Group Members

- Councillor Don Bonner
- Councillor Erin Hemmens
- Deborah Hollis, Nanaimo Family Life Association
- Gordon Fuller, 7-10 Club
- Inga Nielsen-Cooper, Tillicum Lelum
- Jen Cody, Nanaimo Foodshare
- Joel Harry, Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre
- John McCormick, Nanaimo John Howard Society
- Laurie Bienert, Nanaimo Foundation
- Nicole Pankratz, Food for Thought
- Peter Sinclair, Loaves & Fishes
- Marina White, Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Kim Smythe, Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce
- Terra Kaethler, United Way
- Yvonne Borrows, Salvation Army
- Analisa Blake, Island Health
- Carolyn Sampson, BC Corrections, Indigenous Community Development
- Jane Vinet, Nanaimo Community Health Network
- City Staff (Community Planning, Emergency Coordinator, Parks Planning)

Project Process

- Weekly virtual meetings for 1-1.5 hrs
- Met 14 times between April and August 2020
- Meeting attendance fluctuated between 8 and 20 attendees
- Meetings used to both share information and resources, provide updates and generate ideas for how to improve immediate and long-term nutrition and food security in Nanaimo

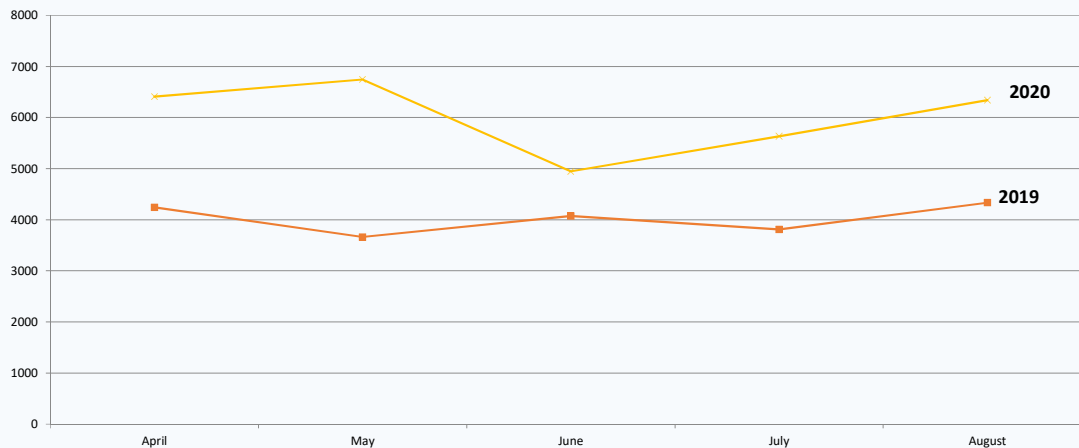
Emergency Food Trends During COVID

- Food bank received more incoming food in 2020 relative to the same months in 2019
- Food bank is distributing significantly more food to agencies in 2020
- Individual visits to food bank dropped in 2020 but the amount of food accessed per individual has increased significantly (numbers of new households registered dropped for the first few months of pandemic then rebounded to typical levels)

Service Delivery Increases During COVID

- Distribution of Good Food Box (Foodshare) has increased 400% including new partnership with Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre for distribution to housing tenants (and has gone from \$10 per box to 50% free boxes)
- Meal service at Salvation Army up ~50% (from 4334 meals in August 2019 to 6343 in August 2020) – They have also stopped charging \$2 per meal
- Nanaimo Ladysmith School District saw increase of 50% to students receiving food hampers during COVID school closure (650 to 998); these numbers dropped during July/August (no new numbers available yet)

Meals Served at Salvation Army 2019 vs 2020



COVID – A Unique & Typical Crisis

Unique factors:

- Unprecedented government support to both individuals (CERB) and agencies (new funding from Feds via the Second Harvest, Salvation Army, Canada Food Banks, United Way as well as private donations through Nanaimo Foundation and United Way)
- As a infectious disease, crisis has longer-term time horizon.

Typical factors:

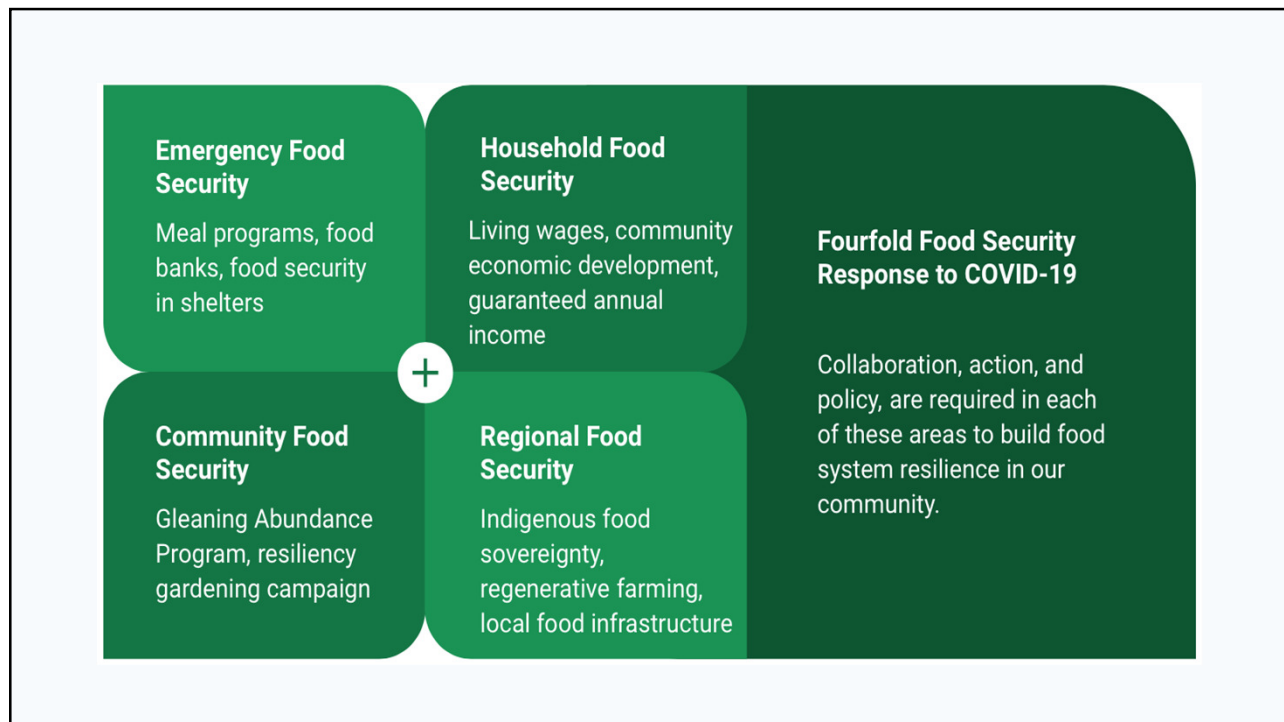
- Crisis a reminder of community dependence on imported food and global supply chain and the importance of locally produced food
- Emergency also showed ability of providers to collaborate especially when there is a regular opportunity to convene and share resources

Lessons Learned

- Crisis has increased collaboration between agencies for shared resources, distribution and information; more can be done
- Food is abundant – Limiting factors are storage and dining hall space
- Unclear whether there is a lack of commercial kitchen space or just limitations in ability to share/conflicts in times kitchens are needed
- Huge benefit in regular communication about resources, opportunities and needs (which the Working Group provided)

Role of City in Emergency Food

- The purchase of food does not fall under the mandate of EMBC or municipalities under the applicable legislation.
- The City recognizes the value of collaborating with the non-profit community and individual volunteers to strengthen our capacity to respond collectively to the basic needs of vulnerable people in the community.
- The City has a role to play in supporting collaborative efforts in an emergency and promoting long-term food security through progressive land use planning practices and policies that promote urban agriculture.



Five Goals of the Strategy

- Meet basic food needs of vulnerable populations during emergency incidents;
- Education, Support and Promotion in support of food literacy and empowerment;
- Growing, raising, and harvesting more food in Nanaimo;
- Expanding Local Food Infrastructure; and
- Recognize and Support Indigenous Food Sovereignty.

Immediate Recommendations

1. That the HHTF recommend Council to support the creation of a Nanaimo Food Policy Council (NFPC) as an independent group
 - Staff would provide Council with a report with recommendation
 - Report would include draft Terms of Reference for review
2. That the Emergency Food and Nutrition Security Strategy be endorsed by Council as formal stakeholder input into REIMAGINE NANAIMO

What is a Food Policy Council?

- Food Policy Councils are relatively commonplace throughout much of the province and across the country, providing a forum for community and food system stakeholders to work collaboratively to examine the operation of the local food system and provide ideas and policy recommendations for how it can be improved.
- The formation of a local Food Policy Council has the potential to provide significant value and synergies with local government initiatives including, but not limited to, food security, sustainability, solid waste management, water supply, emergency planning, economic development, local area land use planning, etc.

What Problems Food Policy Councils Solve?

- The need for greater coordination and information sharing, both during normal times and COVID
- The relationships and trust that create ability to pivot and innovate during a crisis
- Provides a sounding-board and advocacy for greater food security and resilience
- Can be tasked with taking on some of potential policy actions identified in the Emergency Food Strategy, including an emergency food working group

Example: Comox Valley Food Policy Council

- The Comox Valley Regional Food Policy Council (CVFPC) is a Hybrid Model with Indirect Links to Government (\$10,000 grant)
- These food policy initiatives are a hybrid of civil society organizations and government (not an official committee of Comox Valley Regional District) with significant linkages to local government via departments and government staff, with financial support from a mix of sources.
- This format allows us the benefit of blending municipal and civil society organization resources (i.e. funding, additional regional and national support) and expertise, and allows for a more flexible agenda.

Example: Comox Valley Food Policy Council

- The Food Policy Council is its own entity (not a committee of a municipal or regional government)
- The Food Policy Council provides input to all 4 municipal/regional governments and staff about issues of concern (and to K'òmoks First Nation if requested)
- The Food Policy Council considers any matters which may be referred to the Policy Council by local, regional or K'òmoks First Nation and may take positions on policy initiatives from other levels of government within the mandate of the Policy Council

Next Steps

- If the Task Force recommends that Council approve Staff recommendation, the report will be forwarded to their next meeting (19-OCT-2020)
- Should Council approve the Staff recommendation, Staff would return to Council with a recommendation on how to move forward with supporting a Nanaimo Food Policy Council.
- If Council endorses the Food Strategy as input into REIMAGINE NANAIMO, there would be no additional steps required to action this