

ATTACHMENT B

SIX FORMS OF MUNICIPAL FOOD POLICY ACTIVITY

The level of municipal food policy activity across the country surpassed our expectations. The diversity of initiatives is exceptional. Using academic literature, website reviews, surveys of organizational leaders, and phone interviews, we have categorized this diverse activity in the following six ways⁵ (Figure 2). Table 1 summarizes our findings and we have posted

a full analysis at www.tfpc.to/canadian-food-policy-initiatives. Our categorization is primarily organized around the differences, often nuanced, in the structural and resourcing arrangements food policy groups have with local and regional governments. The nuances, however, appear to have an impact on successes and challenges, as we explain later in the report.

■ CATEGORY 1

MUNICIPALITY-DRIVEN FOOD POLICY INITIATIVES

These food policy initiatives are financed by the municipality and directed by municipal staff with advice from external groups. The municipal government sets the mandate and provides financing and staff resources. They are housed within existing municipal government units and external organizations advise and interact with municipal officials.

We found three projects in this category: two in Alberta (Edmonton and Calgary) and one in Metro Vancouver. These are relatively new initiatives, and when we were conducting our survey, they were still

EXAMPLE: EDMONTON FRESH-LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City of Edmonton's Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy (called fresh) focuses on building local food supply, infrastructure, and demand. The goal is a stronger, more vibrant local economy, with food policy and food programs designed to support that goal (www.edmonton.ca/city_government/urban_planning_and_design/food-and-agriculture-project.aspx). It proposes a mix of regulatory policies and food programs, including planning initiatives to protect food-producing lands; the creation of food hubs that include commercial kitchens; improved market, warehouse and storage infrastructure; a local food purchasing policy; a local food festival; a local labelling scheme; and new mobile food, retail and restaurant infrastructure.

rolling out their implementation mechanisms, including food system assessments, charters, action plans, and formal entities to oversee execution of the agenda.

They were created by municipal governments, but influenced by multi-stakeholder groups. The initiatives all reflect a broad food systems approach, driven by concerns about sustainability. Funding and staffing are largely provided by the municipal or regional governments. Although it is too early to know what their impacts will be, they already have some political champions and resources, with the engagement of many units within their jurisdictions.

■ CATEGORY 2

HYBRID MODEL WITH DIRECT LINKS TO GOVERNMENT

These food policy initiatives are a hybrid of civil society organizations and government with a conduit to decision makers through municipal council, and with municipal financing, political champions, and supportive staff. They are characterized by formal municipal endorsements, structural links, and accountability to a government body, including a conduit into the municipal government structure.

In this category are three initiatives in the cities of Toronto, Vancouver, and Markham, Ontario. The Toronto Food Policy Council is more than 20 years old, and was recently instrumental in shaping the Toronto Food Strategy which facilitates food systems connections across city departments, and between municipal government and community. Markham created its food policy in 2011, with a focus on institutional food procurement.

EXAMPLE: CITY OF VANCOUVER FOOD STRATEGY

Crafted by city staff and the Vancouver Food Policy Council, the City of Vancouver's Food Strategy was adopted by City Council at the end of January 2013. Rooted in other municipal strategies and policy frameworks, but displaying a strong food system lens, the strategy focuses on neighbourhood-based initiatives to increase "food assets." Importantly, the strategy serves as a backbone for a comprehensive food systems program that is fully integrated into multiple City programs and managed by City staff today. Equally notable and unique, the strategy is intended to enhance the regional foodshed, extending beyond the City's boundary, and strongly advocates food system change at the provincial and federal levels. The strategy recognizes that effective governance of the food system involves government, civil society, and individual citizens. At the same time, Metro Vancouver (the regional level of government) has developed and adopted a food strategy and is reviewing regulations to make sure they support local food production and procurement. Vancouver's food strategy is intended to complement and build upon the regional strategy, but still be specific to the City of Vancouver.

Typically, these initiatives were intended to address issues of access to affordable food for low-income residents; sustainability concerns (including reducing climate change impacts); and the economic viability of regional agriculture. Their main challenges include fluctuating support from municipal councils, problems with resourcing, and lack of time to implement their agendas. The older initiatives appeared to have the most significant impact,⁶ because food policy agendas take time to develop. Based on the breadth of their memberships and agendas, and from comments we heard in our interviews, we have concluded that they have a food systems focus.

Many of these initiatives have been described in the academic literature and are widely viewed as a preferred structure for a food policy organization because of the way they blend municipal and civil society organization resources and expertise (e.g., Harper et al., 2009; Schiff, 2007; Scherb et al., 2012).

■ CATEGORY 3 HYBRID MODEL WITH INDIRECT LINKS TO GOVERNMENT

Like Category 2, these food policy initiatives are a hybrid of civil society organizations and government, but with fewer formal attachments and lower levels of financing and government staffing arrangements. The conduit to council is less direct, via departments and government staff. The linkages with government are still significant, but less so than for Category 2. Public health structures and staffing are particularly important, with financial support from a mix of sources, including provincial grants.

In this category, we found 14 projects in British Columbia and Ontario, including ones in Kamloops, B.C., and Waterloo Region and Hamilton, Ontario. Most had a regional scope and were created by civil society organizations, sometimes in partnership with local or regional public health units. The motives for their creation were broad, but usually related to social development or health. Several projects had led to the development of food charters.

Links to government were less direct, and depended largely on participating municipal staff or councillors. Staff support was more likely to be the formal or informal assignment of the time of a municipal employee

EXAMPLE: HAMILTON, ONTARIO, COMMUNITY GARDEN COORDINATOR

Excerpt from a report submitted by the Medical Officer of Health to City Council on December 12, 2011: "Hiring a Community Garden Coordinator helped community gardens flourish in Hamilton in 2011. There are now over 30 community gardens - 20 of which sit on Hamilton Housing properties." According to Sarah Wakefield, University of Toronto researcher and past Chair of the Hamilton Community Food Security Stakeholder Advisory Committee, the City of Hamilton is starting to realize how many resources it can leverage through the community garden position. "For \$15,000 you can get donations from Home Depot and hundreds of hours of donations in time. You can beautify derelict spaces. You can engage community members in their communities in ways you couldn't do before. You can reduce the cost of existing community gardens to the city, because now they don't operate allotment-style. These are some of the things the Community Garden Coordinator does for this very small investment. We need to move away from the mindset that this is an unwarranted expense to recognizing all the resources this position can leverage. It's a bargain."

than the direct financing of dedicated staff positions. Half had some dedicated municipal funding, while others survive on a mix of provincial governmental and external grants and volunteer time.

As with the initiatives in Category 2, membership in these groups was diverse and frequently included government representatives. The challenges these groups faced were more pronounced, however, especially securing funding and maintaining staff and continuity. Impacts were often more project-specific, such as the creation of farmers' markets, the development of food box projects, or the establishment of community gardens. Compared to Categories 1 and 2, food systems approaches were still common, but more limited⁷.

■ CATEGORY 4

FOOD POLICY ORGANIZATION LINKED TO GOVERNMENT THROUGH A SECONDARY AGENCY

These food policy initiatives are not formally connected to government, but linked through secondary agencies. They may have important ties to government (such as a municipally endorsed food charter) or receive some government grants.

In this category, we found 15 projects in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Quebec, including ones based in Victoria, Saskatoon, Ottawa, and Montreal. Most have regional responsibilities and were largely started by civil society organizations, sometimes with the engagement of government staff.

EXAMPLE: OTTAWA, ONTARIO, JUST FOOD

Just Food was started in 2000 and has taken various forms since then. It is largely driven by civil society organizations and has operated structurally for much of its life through the city's Social Planning Council. Just Food has proven its value to the municipality by delivering programs that the municipality supports but cannot implement, and a more formal relationship with the City of Ottawa is consequently emerging. Just Food has developed an action plan and is now working to establish a multidimensional Community Food and Urban Agriculture Hub on a National Capital Commission farm property. To achieve its progressive environmental and social agenda, Just Food sees its role as negotiating amongst governmental, corporate, and private actors.

The motive for their creation is typically quite specific: addressing hunger, overcoming barriers to food access, or promoting healthy eating, although a few have wider food system concerns. Some have created municipal food charters, although these charters may not be endorsed by the municipal government.

Their connections to government are largely through committees, agencies such as social planning councils, or provincially mandated organizations. Many did not have staff or had only some part-time staffing support, sometimes through another agency. Staff and money are clear limiting constraints on their growth and effectiveness.

■ CATEGORY 5

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION WITH LIMITED GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND PARTICIPATION

This type of food policy organization consists of a civil society organization roundtable or project committee, on which government officials may participate. The organization may receive some government grants.

In this category, we found 16 initiatives⁸ primarily in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec, including those based in Kaslo, B.C., Sudbury, Ontario, and the Outaouais region of Quebec.

Despite limited resources and staffing, they have local visibility and have managed to enact some projects with some success. Several have created food charters, and secured municipal endorsement for these charters.

The motives for their creation are diverse, but usually focused on specific goals, such as maintaining the viability of local farms or ensuring food security for low-income populations. A wide range of

EXAMPLE: KASLO, BRITISH COLUMBIA, FOOD SECURITY PROJECT

Kaslo has a food hub, which offers nine programs. The organization developed a food charter that has been endorsed by the municipal government. The project conducts community food assessments, and has created policies and procedures for operating food hubs, community gardening guidelines, and a food directory. It is currently writing a guide on community food security for rural communities, working on waste recovery, and creating a community greenhouse with a local arena. The organization is also trying to help the local farming sector by, for example, working on crown land acquisition, drawing up lease agreements, and writing a farm plan for a local farm organization.

organizations were involved in their creation, but typically with less government involvement than Categories 1 to 4.

In general, these initiatives are having difficulty making inroads with local governments, although many participants have connections to elected and unelected officials. There is some evidence of food systems thinking, but resource limitations suggest some difficulties with executing projects with system-wide scope. Some are trying to establish a Food Policy Council structured within the municipality.

■ CATEGORY 6

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS WITH NO DIRECT GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

These food policy initiatives are not formally connected to government and do not seem to partner with government or receive funding. The initiatives, however, are developing a clearer structure and the ability to engage regional government in food system change.

In this category, we found 13 projects, in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador. These initiatives have had some successes, although they are largely

EXAMPLE: CENTRAL OKANAGAN FOOD POLICY COUNCIL/SOCIETY

With roots in the region dating back to 2006, this organization has created a food charter for the region and implemented numerous successful community-based projects. At present, the organization operates without government involvement. It has begun making presentations to municipal councils in the region. A former Councillor for the City of Kelowna is a member of the group and helped the group ensure that food security considerations were included in the city's Official Community Plan. Applications to both government and non-governmental funders have been unsuccessful to date.

unrecognized by local governments. Some have constructed charters and action plans, but these efforts have not substantially affected the work of government bodies. In British Columbia, however, provincial health authorities have often been significant supporters. Their resources are so limited that we had difficulty obtaining information on the projects.

TABLE 1 - CHARACTERIZING MUNICIPAL FOOD POLICY INITIATIVES

Note that these are soft boundaries between the categories; in the transition from one category to the next are initiatives that display characteristics of both.

	Characteristics	Number	Examples
STRONG MUNICIPAL SUPPORT	Cat. 1 - Initiative financed by municipality & directed by municipal staff with external groups advising	3	Edmonton, Calgary, Metro Vancouver
	Cat. 2 - CSO / government hybrid with conduit through municipal council & municipal financing, political champions and dedicated or supportive staff to implement strategies	3	City of Toronto, City of Vancouver, Markham (ON)
	Cat. 3 - Like Cat. 2, but without govt staff and financing; or conduit through departments and govt staff with in-kind financing	14	Huntsville (ON), Waterloo Region (ON), Kamloops (BC)
	Cat. 4 - Conduit to decision makers through "secondary" agencies and their staff, some grant financing from governments	15	Montreal, GTA Agricultural Action Committee (ON), Saskatoon
	Cat. 5 - Government officials sit on CSO roundtable or project committee, limited government funding and participation in implementation	16	Kaslo (BC), Sudbury (ON), Gatineau (QC)
WEAK SUPPORT	Cat. 6 - No direct government involvement	13	Okanagan (BC), Winnipeg, St. John's (NL)

FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

Municipal and regional food policy work is gaining momentum across Canada. In summary, the diversity of the 64 food policy initiatives captured in this assessment appears to be a function of local political and organizational conditions, including the scale and geography of the region and the current realities of poverty and food system function.

These initiatives began to appear in the early 1990s (see timeline page 16) and now cover most regions of the country (see map page 17). As in the United States (Harper et al., 2009), most of the initiatives have appeared since 2000, but especially in the first three categories, many mature initiatives date back to the 1990s.

The municipal food system

Municipalities have not undertaken food policy work to feed themselves. Such opportunities are limited (see MacRae et al., 2010). Rather, they are trying to shift the dynamics amongst food system actors to improve environmental sustainability, health promotion, and economic development. Some of these efforts shift realities within the municipality, many help municipalities realize their multiple goals, and others have wider regional effects.

A municipal food system has many of the dimensions of a larger area (e.g., province or nation) but the proportions of actors, activities and processes are different. Although the municipalities studied here are highly diverse, typically, food producers are involved, but

relatively few of them and mostly small-scale. Most farm input suppliers are small-town or rural. Canada's large food processors and distributors usually locate in large urban areas, although small and medium-sized processing firms are dispersed across a range of locations. Many municipalities actively work to retain their food processors and distributors because of the important economic development activity they bring.

Restaurants, work places, health care facilities, schools and institutes of higher learning are a large part of urban food systems and often equally significant for economic activity. Government agents and policy makers tend to be centralized in mid-sized and large communities, a change from the days in which they were based in smaller communities. Food system change activists also are largely urban.

Given population shifts, consumers are now primarily urban and suburban, so municipalities need to provide many food system functions, such as planning, social development, economic development, environment, parks and recreation, and public health services that focus on food

safety and nutritional health. Municipalities are also engaged in the direct provision of food to students and to children in daycare, as well as to residents in shelters of long-term care.

What were the municipal drivers?

For initiatives in Categories 1 to 3, there appears to have been at least one politically pressing local food problem (such as an increased reliance on food banks, health problems, or the loss of farmland) that stimulated initial interest. But given the kind of discussions that flow from multi-sectoral representation, the initiatives or groups came to recognize that one issue was connected to others in the food system.

It may not matter whether the initiative is driven by economic or social/health/community objectives, although public health units have been the most important supporters of these efforts, followed by planning, social, and economic development units within municipal governments. What is more important is whether the impetus created by one unit attracts support from other government units. This requires at least one strong champion.

Equally important appears to be how the food agenda can be tied to other municipal mandates. Categories 1 to 3 in particular, food activity is directly correlated to provincial or municipal government mandates. These include British Columbia's focus on healthy food; Vancouver's commitment to sustainability, Toronto's commitment to strong neighbourhoods, and commitments by other governments to address food insecurity. These commitments open up opportunities for civil society organizations to show governments how their action on food can help fulfil those other mandates.

In Categories 4 to 6, food policy initiatives are linked to municipal policies that are sometimes

less directly pertinent to food system change, although supportive municipal officials from public health, social development, and economic development may serve as members. In some cases, especially in British Columbia and Ontario, public health staff have been essential to what has emerged.

How do funding and budgets affect food initiatives?

Budget security can affect an organization's ability to implement a range of initiatives. Initiatives that are not funded by government face the dilemma of how to finance their own core function at the same time that their wider network of actors and their projects are also precariously financed.

Governments can spur the multiplier effect that comes from core financing of food initiatives. For example, between 1991 and 1998, the Toronto Food Policy Council, funded by the city at the rate of approximately \$220,000 a year, helped raise more than \$7 million dollars from other sources for community food projects. Since 2010, the Toronto Food Strategy has been able to attract funding from charitable foundations and the provincial government for multiple initiatives. The City of Vancouver has recently brokered a deal with the Vancouver Foundation to fund green initiatives, including projects that increase the supply of local food, in part inspired by the work of the Vancouver Food Policy Council. The City pays for one half of each new initiative and the foundation pays for the other half.

Food projects can be complex, with many partners involved, and progress can be slow. In general, the longer an organization has been in existence, the greater its impact. Initiatives with fewer direct links to municipal government and more tenuous funding struggle more with effectiveness than those with more direct links and supports.