

DATE OF MEETING October 1, 2020

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SUBJECT EMERGENCY FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY STRATEGY

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide the Health and Housing Task Force with the Emergency Food and Nutrition Strategy along with implementation actions for the Task Force to consider recommending to Council.

Recommendation

That the Health and Housing Task Force recommend that Council:

- 1) endorse the Emergency Food and Nutrition Strategy as formal stakeholder input into the **REIMAGINE** NANAIMO process; and,
- 2) support the creation of a Nanaimo Food Policy Council as an independent, arms-length body that would continue collaborative work to strengthen the local food system and request that Staff bring forward a report on how the City can facilitate this work.

BACKGROUND

On 01-APR-2020, Council passed the following motion:

“That Council direct the Health and Housing Task Force to develop a food security plan; including funding, procurement and distribution options to provide safe and consistent meals for individuals experiencing homelessness and the vulnerable population.”

The COVID-19 Food Security Working Group of the Health and Housing Task Force met for the first time on 09-APR-2020 and developed the Working Group Guidelines (see attachment A).

The Guidelines, which were approved by Council on 11-MAY-2020, identify two purposes for the project:

- 1) To develop a food security plan; including funding, procurement and distribution options to provide safe and consistent food for vulnerable individuals¹, including those experiencing homelessness and seniors; and,

¹ 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, people with compromised immune systems or chronic illness, disabled, and those experiencing homelessness.

- 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.

The Working Group met weekly fourteen times between April and August 2020. The group included the co-chairs of the Task Force, Snuneymuxw First Nation, Island Health, Chamber of Commerce, Loaves and Fishes Food Bank, Nanaimo Foodshare, the United Way, the 7-10 Club, Salvation Army, Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre, Nanaimo Family Life Association, Food for Thought, Vancouver Island Community Corrections, the Nanaimo Community Health Network, and the Nanaimo Foundation. Representatives from other agencies, such as the Island Roots Co-operative Farmer's Market, also joined for specific conversations as requested.

In the initial months of the pandemic, the weekly meetings focused primarily on sharing information and resources and providing updates on which service organizations were reaching out to various communities. There was also a significant amount of new funding available through grants from the Nanaimo Foundation's Community Response Fund and Federal Government's Emergency Community Support Fund (distributed through the United Way and the Nanaimo Foundation). The meetings served as an opportunity to share information about funding opportunities (see Attachment B, pp. 5-6, for details on funding allocations) and for the different agencies to support each other in finding solutions to challenges identified.

Some of the lessons learned from the information sharing included that Nanaimo is actually well-positioned to respond to emergency food needs. However, continued coordination and information sharing remain key for the following reasons:

- 1) Nanaimo has an excellent food recovery program through the Loaves & Fishes Food Bank, which saw an increase in food donations and a significant increase in food distribution to agencies since April. The pandemic has actually increased the amount of surplus food available through the Food Bank; for example, they received 9000 dozen eggs a week for over two months. The top concern of the Food Bank is warehousing space as they are currently not able to accommodate all the donations they would like to store. The Food Bank would like to encourage agencies to avoid purchasing food where possible and make use of the abundant surplus food available.
- 2) The need for low-cost/free groceries and meal programs rose during the pandemic and continues to remain high. A number of service providers have partnered as a result. The Good Box Food, a low-cost/free grocery box program operated through Nanaimo Foodshare, has increased 400% during the pandemic and led to new partnerships with groups such as the Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre. The box includes locally produced goods and bulk purchased food. The Salvation Army is providing hampers of ready-to-eat food to the outreach teams for distribution by the Canadian Mental Health Association who provide outreach to the homeless encampments.
- 3) Meal programs at the Salvation Army and the 7-10 Club saw some initial fluctuations in numbers when the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) came through, but overall numbers at the Salvation Army remain higher than pre-pandemic. The 7-10 Club has had to move to a takeaway model, which has reduced numbers. The Salvation Army is looking at potentially offering brunch on the weekends rather than lunch. There is currently no free meal service on Saturdays and Sundays except for a Sunday breakfast program on Wesley Street funded through the BC/Yukon Association of Drug

War Survivors, which only has temporary funding. Seating and cold storage remain an issue for the Salvation Army, though the Food Bank has been able to assist with the latter.

- 4) While some service providers regularly work together, overall there is not a coordinated approach to advancing the long-term, shared goals of the community groups involved in supporting food security in Nanaimo. For example, there is currently an open funding call for the Local Food Infrastructure Fund (LFIF), a five-year, \$50 million initiative ending 2024-MAR-31. Eligible projects can range from simpler requests such as purchasing a refrigerator for a food bank to more complex requests that strengthen local food systems, such as projects that integrate multiple areas of the value chain through the creation of partnerships. While the group discussed the merits of making a joint application, the Working Group was not the appropriate venue to develop such an application and there was no alternative food security coalition/group to which to forward this opportunity.

After the first month of information sharing, the group began to work on developing a response to the immediate and longer-term food security needs of the community. The ideas generated fell into five broad policy goals:

- Meet basic food needs of vulnerable populations during emergency incidents;
- The 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.

DISCUSSION

Food security has long been identified as an issue of importance to the City. In 2008, the City of Nanaimo adopted food security goals and policies as part of the Official Community Plan (OCP). The key needs and opportunities identified for developing a coordinated strategic approach to local food systems included:

- The need to protect farmland and increase food growing opportunities;
- The need for local food infrastructure;
- The need for more and better access to fresh healthy food and community food assets;
- The potential to expand the value of the local food economy; and,
- The opportunity to elevate Nanaimo food culture.

The OCP also included an action item within the Implementation Strategy to develop a food system strategy to establish objectives and policies for the implementation of a food program, which has not been completed to date. However, many of the other action items are already underway through the City's Parks, Recreation and Culture department (see Attachment C). As well, the City continues to seek opportunities to support long-term food security initiatives through programs and partnerships.

In terms of emergency food provision, the City of Nanaimo has a more limited role. The City is legislated to follow the British Columbia Emergency Management System and applicable Provincial and Federal Emergency Management Legislation. Emergency Management BC (EMBC) takes a "whole of society" approach in managing emergencies. In emergencies, where there is a disruption in the Provincial Supply Chain, the City would work with local distributors

and EMBC through legislated channels to attempt to re-establish the supply chain for the whole community. The purchase of food does not fall under the mandate of EMBC or municipalities under the applicable legislation.

However, the City does acknowledge 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. As we have seen through the pandemic, community and residents can be even better prepared for future emergencies through collaboration that plans for a coordinated community response.

One of the ways our community could enhance existing coordination would be the initiation of a Nanaimo Food Policy Council (NFPC). Food Policy Councils are relatively common throughout much of the province and across the country, providing a forum for community and food system stakeholders to work collaboratively to improve the local food system. 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, sustainability, solid waste management, water supply, emergency planning, economic development, and land use planning.

The Working Group identified several areas where a NFPC could take the lead:

- Provide an ongoing forum for emergency food response and distribution that includes emergency food providers, Island Health, BC Housing, the Regional District of Nanaimo and the City to develop an emergency food response plan between the key players where supply chain remains intact.
- Work with the City's emergency coordinator and community stakeholders to identify areas of opportunity to include food and nutrition security in their community outreach role, and identify the additional resources required to implement food and nutrition.
- Develop a food infrastructure strategy that supports community organizations who provide healthy food to the community.
- Facilitate partnerships with Island Health and the Regional District of Nanaimo to secure funding for a full-time dietitian with background in food and nutrition security with a mandate to work directly with community groups to build capacity for food and nutrition security in the Nanaimo Local Health Area.
- Identify resources for collective action to create an Indigenous Dietician position for the mid-Island/Nanaimo Local Health Area through Island Health/First Nations Health Authority.

Should the Task Force recommend that Council support the creation of a Nanaimo Food Policy Council as an independent, arms-length body and Council agrees with this recommendation, the next step would be for Staff to bring forward a report to Council on how the City can facilitate this work through in-kind and/or financial support.

In terms of the goals and actions in the Strategy related to City programs and policies, Staff are recommending that Council endorse the Strategy as formal stakeholder input into REIMAGINE NANAIMO (the City's Coordinated Strategic Plan Review). Some of the suggested actions need further research that could be part of updating the City's Official Community Plan, while other actions are already underway (see Attachment C). All of the input provided by the Working Group moves in the common direction of strengthening our ability to respond to local food and nutrition needs and would strengthen this aspect of the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process.

OPTIONS

1. That the Health and Housing Task Force recommend that Council:
 - 1) endorse the Emergency Food and Nutrition Strategy as formal stakeholder input into the **REIMAGINE** NANAIMO process; and,
 - 2) support the creation of a Nanaimo Food Policy Council as an independent, arms-length body that would continue collaborative work to strengthen the local food system and request that Staff bring forward a report on how the City can facilitate this work.
 - The advantages of this option: Provides concrete, actionable next steps for advancing the outcomes of the Working Group and improving food and nutrition security for Nanaimo's vulnerable populations.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Requires returning to Council with a follow-up report related to options to support the creation of a Nanaimo Food Policy Council.
 - Financial Implications: Any financial implications related to supporting the creation of an arms-length Nanaimo Food Policy Council will be provided in a future report.
2. That the Health and Housing Task Force provide alternative direction.]

SUMMARY POINTS

- The COVID-19 Food Security Working Group of the Health and Housing Task Force has created an Emergency Food and Nutrition Security Strategy.
- The purpose of the Strategy is to address both the short-term and longer-term food security concerns of Nanaimo's vulnerable populations.
- The Strategy could be applied as formal stakeholder input into the **REIMAGINE** NANAIMO process.
- The City's potential role in the creation of a Nanaimo Food Policy Council can be considered in a future staff report.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Working Group Guidelines (COVID-19 Food Security Working Group)
Attachment B: Emergency Food and Nutrition Security Strategy
Attachment C: Parks, Recreation and Culture – Food Security Actions Underway |

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ATTACHMENT A



WORKING GROUP GUIDELINES TASK FORCE ON HEALTH AND HOUSING COVID-19 FOOD SECURITY WORKING GROUP

PURPOSE:

- 1) To develop a food security plan; including funding, procurement and distribution options to provide safe and consistent food for vulnerable individuals¹, 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.

OBJECTIVES:

Supports the mandate of the Health and Housing Task Force on community food security issues and related policy development, including the development of a Food Security Plan that incorporates the following:

1. Identifies and makes recommendations regarding funding opportunities to enhance food security for vulnerable populations;
2. Facilitates and coordinates a collective community approach to food security for homeless and vulnerable populations in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic;
3. Recommends strategic actions and specific policy/by-law changes to support and enhance community food security;
4. Encourages innovation and community development by providing information to local organizations (e.g. research, grant information);
5. Includes the needs and perspectives of individuals and communities who are marginalized by the current food system (e.g., people living in poverty, farmers).

MEMBERSHIP:

Stakeholders representing, but not limited to:

¹ 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, people with compromised immune systems or chronic illness, disabled, and those experiencing homelessness.

- Up to four (4) members of the Health and Housing Task Force
- Emergency food service providers
- Food advocacy organizations
- Food producers (farmers) and processors
- Social service advocates and/or providers
- School District 68
- Vancouver Island University
- Relevant labour organizations
- Food industry (production, retail and/or food services)
- Those directly experiencing food insecurity
- City of Nanaimo staff

Chair (rotating) – Member of the Health and Housing Task Force

MEETING FREQUENCY:

Meetings will be held weekly by teleconference until June 1, 2020, at which time the schedule will be reviewed.

STAFF SUPPORT:

The following City Departments will provide support to the Working Group as needed:

- Community Planning

ATTACHMENT B

Emergency Food and Nutrition Security Strategy
City of Nanaimo Health and Housing Task Force
Draft Update: 22-SEPT-2020



Photo credit: Maddy Koch

Context Statement: Food and Nutrition Security in Nanaimo

COVID -19 has revealed the importance of food and nutrition security to our community. Government, businesses and individuals have an increased awareness of food and nutrition security issues. Community members have become more aware of where their food comes from. Many are concerned with the health and sustainability of the food they eat, and, as more and more people struggle to put good food on the table, our food system has become an issue of increasing priority. The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted how those who struggle with food and nutrition security may be even more vulnerable when the global systems of food production, processing and distribution are interrupted by a large-scale emergency.

Local Government Emergency Management

The City of Nanaimo is legislated to follow the British Columbia Emergency Management System (BCEMS) and applicable Provincial and Federal Emergency Management Legislation. Emergency Management takes a whole of society approach in managing emergencies. In emergencies, where there is a disruption in the Provincial Supply Chain, the City would work with local distributors and EMBC through legislated channels to attempt to re-establish the supply chain for the whole community.

The purchase of food does not fall under the mandate of EMBC or municipalities under the applicable legislation. However, the City of Nanaimo Emergency Management division has had and continues to have ongoing discussions with a variety of agencies, organizations and businesses with regard to food supply during emergencies. The City and other organizations involved in drafting this plan recognize the value of collaboration between government, the non-profit community and individual volunteers to strengthen our capacity to respond collectively to the basic needs of vulnerable people in the community. We recognize that our community and residents can be even better prepared for future emergencies through collaboration that plans for a coordinated community response in the ongoing pandemic and in the event of other emergencies.

The City of Nanaimo and its Role in a Resilient Food System

Food issues and activities cut across all levels of government, business, industry, community, and education sectors. While the role of local government in the food system is not specifically identified in the Local Government Act, with the exception of agricultural land use planning, it is important to define how the City of Nanaimo has influence and authority to create resilient food systems and implement policies that support local food and nutrition security. These areas, and relevant examples, include:

- Land Use and Development (official community plan, zoning bylaw, development approvals, subdivision, guidelines and requirements)
- Open Space Management (parks and open space, food festivals, farmers markets, municipal facilities and landscaping, engineering standards)

- Growth Planning Coordination (urban containment boundaries, densification, farm / urban edge integration)
- Corporate Operations (food procurement, demonstration kitchens and gardens)
- Transportation (food distribution, walkable and transit oriented food amenities, infrastructure placement)
- Economic Development (agri- and culinary tourism, local multiplier effect)
- Waste Systems (composting)
- Partnerships (food strategy implementation)

In 2008, the City of Nanaimo adopted food security goals and policies as part of the Official Community Plan. This also included an action item within the Implementation Strategy to develop a food system strategy to establish objectives and policies for the implementation of a food program. The key needs and opportunities identified for developing a coordinated strategic approach to local food systems included:

- The need to protect farmland and increase food growing opportunities;
- The need for local food infrastructure;
- The need for more and better access to fresh healthy food and community food assets;
- The potential to expand the value of the local food economy; and
- The opportunity to elevate Nanaimo food culture.

Since 2008, the City has taken many steps to support food and nutrition security and healthy food systems in policy and action. The Beban Park Master Plan update, Urban Forest Strategy, and Community Gardens Policy are among some of the examples of larger policy efforts. Many ongoing food production initiatives are taking place in City of Nanaimo parks. There are eight community gardens and several food forests and partnership initiatives throughout the City, including Beaufort Community Garden, Beban Learning Gardens, Pawson Park Community Gardens, Forest Drive Gyro Park and the recent investment in the Park Avenue property (see Appendix 1).

While these efforts have been significant, an overall City of Nanaimo Food and Nutrition Security Strategy had not been developed by the time the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in MAR-2020. This emergency has highlighted the need for a better and more coordinated food system. In order to create this, many agencies and individuals must work together to start thinking more comprehensively about governance that includes food security as a consideration (or part of) community planning and program implementation and policy. Island Health, the Regional District of Nanaimo, First Nations governments and the non-profit community all have a role in achieving this vision.

While this document aims more specifically at addressing emerging and emergency food needs in our community, it is also a step towards undertaking a more comprehensive planning process. There are a number of themes that have emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic that speak to the risks in the food system and possible mitigation factors. We have outlined these trends and themes below.

Emergency Food

The response to COVID has been an emergency food response. With decreased capacity by some service providers (e.g. reduced shelter space, greater social distancing in dining halls) emergency food access has been disrupted for some vulnerable populations. At different times during the pandemic, some food supply and materials have been harder to access for emergency food providers.¹ There has also been reduced emergency food provision capacity (volunteers, staff) because of changing health and safety procedures, including the need to deliver food, and temporary closures of some food access depots, and the rising costs of providing food services. There is concern that food prices will continue to rise and food shortages increase because of disrupted food chains in Canada and the US.

However, the pandemic has also revealed the strength of Nanaimo's low/no cost food service providers in terms of partnerships, ability to adapt and to temporarily shift operations in response to local needs. The Loaves and Fishes food bank reports receiving more food donations in 2020 relative to the same months in 2019, and is distributing significantly more food to some agencies (though other agencies ceased to visit the food bank at all, particularly during the initial months of the pandemic). At the same time, individual visits to food bank dropped in 2020 but the amount of food accessed per individual increased significantly (numbers of new households registered dropped for the first few months of pandemic then rebounded to typical levels). The reasons for this are not known and likely multi-variable, but it shows the importance of agencies that are able to distribute the resources from the food bank even when usual depots are closed.

Loaves and Fishes Food Bank has noted that ability to store food donations is their primary operational limitation. The larger service agencies, including the Salvation Army, the Nanaimo Ladysmith Schools Foundation, report accessing 75% of their grocery needs through the Food Bank.

Many service agencies report having significantly increasing operations during the first six months of COVID. Distribution of Good Food Box (Foodshare) increased ten-fold between February and August, including a new partnership with Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre for distribution to their housing tenants. Meal service at Salvation Army has increased approximately 50% since the pandemic began (from 4334 meals in August 2019 to 6343 in August 2020); notably, the Salvation Army also has stopped charging a nominal fee of \$1-2 for lunch or dinner.

This trend was also seen in the youth demographic. Nanaimo Ladysmith School District's food program increased enrollment of students receiving family-sized food hampers by 50% during COVID school closure (650 to 998). These numbers dropped during July/August (no new numbers available yet). The exception to the increase has been the use of the 7-10 Club Breakfast Program, which is serving about 75-125 people per day (down 35-50% from pre-COVID numbers). The program may have been more heavily affected because it has not been able, due to COVID restrictions, to provide sit-down service (the Salvation Army's dining room is still open

¹ CRFAIR ebriefts and Meeting notes from Health and Housing Taskforce Food Security Working Group

but with reduced capacity). Another factor may be that many who have traditionally utilized low-cost food service are now receiving some form of COVID emergency financial assistance.

COVID Grants and Financial Supports

Most, if not all of the emergency food providers in Nanaimo have accessed some kind of COVID-related grant. Below is the list of the grants awarded through the Nanaimo Foundation, the United Way and from the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund to local food service providers (note some of these agencies do more than food provision and the grant may have also been for activities beyond emergency food provision):

Nanaimo Foundation Community Response Fund

Loaves & Fishes Community Food Bank	\$20,000
Nanaimo Youth Services Association	\$25,000
Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation	\$42,000
Nanaimo Foodshare Society	\$36,000
Nanaimo 7 – 10 Club Society	\$5,000
Salvation Army Nanaimo	\$10,000

Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund (Community Foundation stream)

Nanaimo 7-10 Club Society	Feeding people with dignity and respect	\$10,000
Wisteria Community Association	Stone Soup	\$10,000

Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund (United Way stream)

Meals on Wheels Nanaimo	\$30,000
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Nanaimo Foodshare Society (Good Food Box)	\$35,000
Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation (Food4Schools)	\$30,000
Nanaimo Youth Services Association (Youth Food Initiative)	\$5,000
Nanaimo Community Kitchens (COVID Cooking out of the box)	\$40,000
Wisteria Community Association	\$5,000

New Horizons Senior Funding (United Way stream)

Salvation Army Nanaimo (Seniors Food Hampers)	\$10,000
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Reaching Home Emergency Funding

Nanaimo Unitarian Church (Food and Bottled Water for Shower Program)	\$2,000
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United Way Local Love

Salvation Army Nanaimo (Bottled Water for Bag Lunch Program)	\$2,000
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In addition to the above, some agencies such as the Salvation Army received some direct support from the Federal Government (amount TBC). Loaves and Fishes received \$370,000 From Food Banks BC/Food Banks Canada and the Victoria Foundation (funds from Food Banks BC and Food Banks Canada are flow through funds from the provincial and federal government).

Household Food Insecurity

Household food insecurity is the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints.² There is concern for the medium and long-term economic impacts on household

² PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research. Accessed from: <https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/>

food insecurity. Before the COVID-19, there were 4.4 million food insecure people in Canada and that number is expected to double as a result of the pandemic.³ According to PROOF, in 2017-18, there were 555,700 people living in food-insecure households in British Columbia. A 2016 report reveals that the highest rate of severe food insecurity was in Island Health, affecting almost one in 25 households (3.8%).⁴

Furthermore, Indigenous households remain at a much higher risk of household food insecurity and are more likely to be severely food-insecure, even when other socio-economic risk factors are taken into account.⁵ In addition to low income, food insecurity can result when individuals move from one area of the country to another or from rural to urban locations (where they may be less familiar with the available resources or where they are unfamiliar with local foods available for harvest).

Community Food and Nutrition Security

There is a significant increase in people wanting to grow food, seed access and availability of garden supplies have decreased because of increased demand. Furthermore, demand for education on how to grow and preserve foods has increased significantly. Many people are concerned about preparing for a second wave of the virus, which is anticipated by health experts in BC to appear in the fall of 2020.⁶ Local growers have been impacted due to shifts in market demand. Restaurant sales have disappeared, up to 40% of the planned crops for the season have been reduced for some farms, while demand for local grown produce has increased. Some farms have increased the number of Community Supported Agriculture boxes offered to the community and sold out.

Regional Food and Nutrition Security

Regional food systems are more important now than they ever have been. We have witnessed since March 2020 the fragility of the global food system. For example, several outbreaks in meat processing plants in Canada, a sector that has undergone intensive concentration, have resulted in more expensive and less available protein in grocery stores. In May, two of three major meat processing plants were shut down, decreasing meat processing in Canada by 45%.

These are complex issues; however, how we react locally will make a big difference to our resilience as a community. The following graphic shows how we can build capacity in the local food system across these geographies:

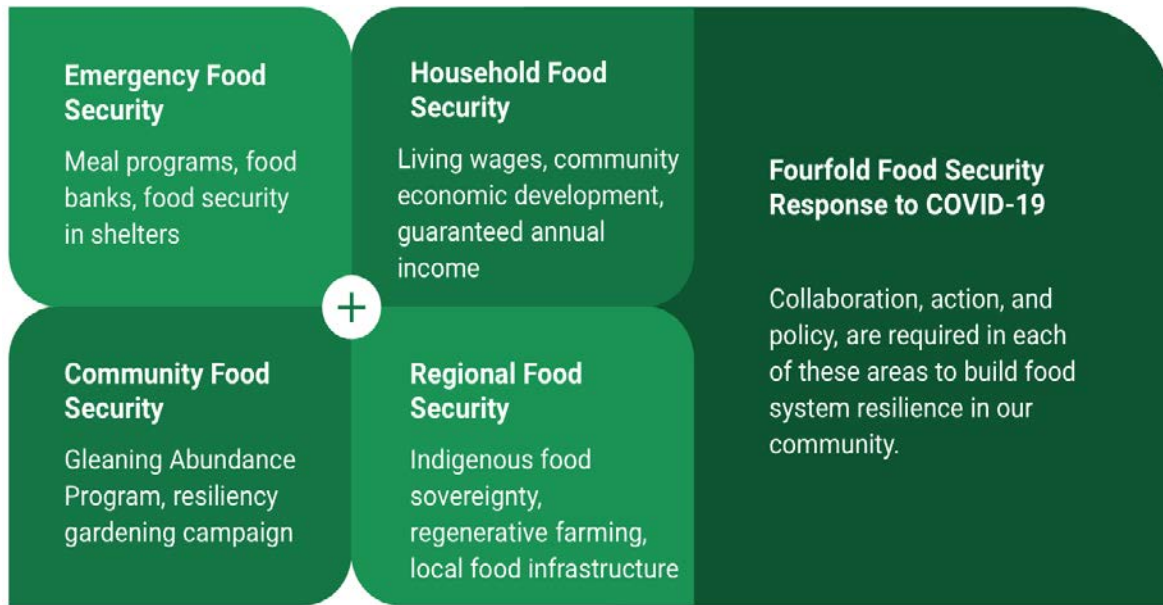
³ Food Secure Canada (2020) Growing Resilience and Equity: A Food Policy Action Plan in the Context of COVID-19. Accessed from: https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/2020-05_-_gre_en_12_49.pdf

⁴ Li Na, Dachner Naomi, Tarasuk Valerie, et al. (2016). Priority health equity indicators for British Columbia: Household food insecurity indicator report. Retrieved from: http://www.bccdc.ca/pop-public-health/Documents/Household%20food%20insecurity%20in%20BC_full%20report.pdf

⁵ PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research. "Indigenous peoples and food insecurity." Accessed from:

<https://proof.utoronto.ca/resources/research-publications/aboriginal-peoples-and-food-insecurity/>

⁶ CBC (May 12, 2020) BC's Top Doctor Bonnie Henry Says 2nd Wave of COVID-19 Inevitable, but Current Lessons Will Guide Response. Accessed from: <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-may-21-2020-1.5577286/b-c-s-top-doctor-bonnie-henry-says-2nd-wave-of-covid-19-inevitable-but-current-lessons-will-guide-response-1.5577290>



Source: Kamloops Food Policy Council

Within each of the four areas of the Food System is Nutrition Security and Food Literacy. Nutrition security means that people have access to the foods that nourish them. Food literacy means people have the skills and knowledge to make positive food choices that help to support health. The Emergency Food and Nutrition Security Strategy aims to address the two goals of the project Terms of Reference:

- 1) To develop a food and nutrition security plan; including funding, procurement and distribution options to provide safe and consistent food for vulnerable individuals⁷, 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. The proposed Food and Nutrition Security Plan offers a number of potential policy actions categorized under five goals:

- Meet basic food needs of vulnerable populations during emergency incidents;
- The 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.

⁷ 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

Goal #1: Meet basic food needs of vulnerable populations during emergency incidents

1.1 The City of Nanaimo, Province of BC, BC Housing, local service providers, and Island Health to collaborate to ensure adequate supply of safe drinking water and nutritious food for vulnerable populations in an emergency.⁸

Actions:

- Develop a working group focused on emergency food response and distribution that includes emergency food providers, Island Health, BC Housing, the RDN and the City to develop an emergency food response plan between the key players where supply chain remains in tact (this may be a sub-group of the Nanaimo Food Policy Council).
- Explore opportunity to co-host with vulnerable population food service providers and shelter/supportive housing on developing business continuity plans in event of emergencies, leveraging existing resources from Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and building off local successes (e.g. Salvation Army, Loaves and Fishes)
- City to maintain a map of where free clean drinking water can be publically accessed.

1.2 Facilitate communications between emergency food providers and other food and nutrition security stakeholders.

- City to keep a current list of stakeholders providing food to vulnerable populations and maintain ongoing communications through a Nanaimo Food Policy Council.
- City to participate in ongoing communications with emergency food providers and food and nutrition security stakeholders through creation and participation of a Nanaimo Food Policy Council.

1.3 Needs Assessment

- Conduct a needs assessment using service providers' input to identify those who are most at risk are and generate ways of reaching them.
- Inventory the 'players' currently in our community who are already in the business of food and nutrition security and weave together a common process of accessing service.
- Anticipate and plan for changes to need in the community as some income support programs cease and new ones become available.
- Determine how different types of emergencies require different food responses/plans.
- Conduct an inventory of local food infrastructure, using existing roadmaps (e.g. PAHO).
- Maximise use of and expand existing infrastructure and community gardens/food forests in parks as growing sites for emergency and future food needs.

⁸ Community nutrition standard is three meals a day, every day. Emergency food rations should meet the requirements outlined in the following document from the Pan American Health Organization:
https://www.paho.org/disasters/index.php?option=com_docman&view=download&category_slug=tools&alias=538-pandinflu-leadershipduring-tool-11&Itemid=1179&lang=en

1.4 Ensure that vulnerable populations are included in planning processes.

- Identify and support leaders among vulnerable populations: unhoused, seniors, single parent families, multicultural communities/groups, etc.
- Work with organizations that serve the unhoused to have task force of clients and client support workers that can be mobilized, particularly during a crisis.
- Engage with established programs that support and empower vulnerable clients in engaging in participation in decision-making processes.

Goal #2 – Education, Support and Promotion in Support of Food Literacy and Empowerment

2.1 Enhance capacity of food and nutrition security leadership for the community of Nanaimo

Actions:

- Seek to support a new Nanaimo Food Policy Council (NFPC)
 - City staff provide Council with a report on options for how the municipality could partner with other agencies and government bodies to create a NFPC, and provide a recommendation that clearly outlines the staff and financial resources required to create and sustain the NFPC.
 - Request that this report include a draft Terms of Reference for Council consideration.
- Partner with the Food Policy Council to facilitate partnership with Island Health and the Regional District of Nanaimo to secure funding for a full time dietitian with background in food and nutrition security with a mandate to work directly with community groups to build capacity for food and nutrition security in the Nanaimo Local Health Area.

2.2 Confirm Food and nutrition Security as an Emerging Priority

- As part of REIMAGINE Nanaimo (Coordinated Strategic Plan Review process), revisit the role of the City in food and nutrition security, building on the commitments and policy actions already identified in the 2008 Official Community Plan (e.g. to develop City Food Strategy document) and identify food and nutrition security as an priority area.
- Request that City staff with a role in enhancing food and nutrition security (land use, parks, social planning, etc.) meet annually to share information and create a joint update to Council on how the food and nutrition security policies in key documents are being implemented.

2.3 Expand community understanding of household emergency preparedness by including food and nutrition security

- NFPC to work with City's emergency coordinator and community stakeholders to identify areas of opportunity to include food and nutrition security in their community outreach role, and identify additional resources required to implement food and nutrition

household emergency preparedness (recommendation is for every household to have a personal seven day supply of food.)

- Create and distribute/facilitate an interactive curriculum that encourages emergency food leadership in families and neighbourhoods in the event of an emergency.
- Engage organizations in emergency training outreach to ensure training includes a emergency food education component.

Goal #3: Grow, raise, and harvest more food in Nanaimo

3.1 Support and expand supports for families to garden

Actions:

- Where appropriate, continue to support and expand community gardens, food forests, farms and food literacy programs/events (see Appendix One).
- Acknowledge that food production in the public realm has unique challenges and experiment with pilot projects and creative ways to safely integrate edible landscapes where appropriate.
- Support and expand operation of a seasonal community-gleaning program.
- Support the development of a food tree map for sites on public spaces with links to gleaning opportunities.
- Consider expanding the City tree voucher program to include plant starts.
- Support community seed collection and sharing initiatives
- Market and sign locations on existing public sites that already have growing beds and food trees for community use (not allotments), and where the public can freely pick up produce and extra harvest items at no charge. Alternately, link volunteers with excess harvests to emergency food distribution chains.
- Continue to develop a calendar for planting, harvesting, foraging and gleaning opportunities on public land.
- Where appropriate, continue to sign crops and edible landscapes on public land through interpretive signage to better explain growing efforts and identify edible food.
- Consider linking with the Master Garden program and connecting it with peer-to-peer organizations.



Beaufort Park Food Forest



Learning Gardens and greenhouse at Beban Park

3.2 Support and expand farming

- Review Agricultural policies adopted by Regional District of Nanaimo and Beban Park Master Plan Update (2015) for implementation consideration by the City where practical.
- Explore incentives for food production at the local level (i.e., fast tracking of community gardens, etc.).
- Continue to explore opportunities for food production in appropriate parks such as East Wellington Park (Agricultural Land Reserve designated).
- Review of municipal best practices that support municipal farming and agriculture and recommend adoption or adaptation of City of Nanaimo Bylaws.⁹

3.3 Increase food production in the public realm

- Collaborate with community organizations and partners to grow food on City land where appropriate, with the recognition that maintenance is the key issue and that partnerships with local organizations through use and maintenance agreements greatly facilitates the potential for expanded edible planting.
- Identify priority areas where the existing infrastructure is available to expand community food production.
- Support installation of required infrastructure for food production in appropriate public locations (water supply, irrigation, soils, etc.) and support installation of water services at new parks.

Goal #4: Expand Local Food Infrastructure (Food Storage, Processing and Distribution)

Objective:

- 4.1 Task the NFPC with developing a food infrastructure strategy that supports community organizations who provide healthy food to the community

Actions:

- Undertake a needs assessment to determine which user groups need what type of food infrastructure. Determine if there are any synergies and opportunities to share facilities between user groups, including any underutilized food storage facilities that non-profits could use, for use both in the event of an emergency and during regular operations.
- Inventory existing City facilities and land that could be leveraged to support identified community food needs, including storage facilities that can bulge/expand as needed.
- Explore the potential of providing affordable contributions of city-owned land or facility to expand food storage and distribution facilities (which may include a larger storage and distribution warehouse, garden surplus exchange, certified kitchen, cold and dry storage).

⁹ Potential Zoning Bylaw amendments to consider include: Allowing Small-scale Commercial Urban Food Production in All Zones, allowing “urban agriculture” as a home occupation to permit up to two people living on site to produce fruits and vegetables for retail purposes on a portion of the parcel; exemptions for Rooftop Greenhouses Rooftop greenhouses can enable year-round local food production.

- Consider the importance of sector-specific economic development and business accelerator programs in key sectors for growth such as agri-food and direct a portion of the city's economic development funding to this work.
- Continue to collaborate and partner with community organizations to support food production efforts on City-owned land.
- Continue to advocate for and support the expansion of capacity of existing local abattoirs or adding a new one, in order to expand food processing capacity in the region.
- Continue to work with the VIEEX, Island Roots Market and other community partners on the development of agricultural and food production/showcase areas within the central development area at Beban Park.

4.2 Strengthen Local Food Assets

- Include local food and nutrition security and food economy as key issues to be considered as part of the REIMAGINE NANAIMO coordinated strategic plan review process (which includes the Economic Development Strategy), and include targeted engagement and proposed policy review with food and nutrition security experts in this process.
- Through local economic development initiatives, support initiatives to link community residents with local producers, including community supported agriculture (CSA) and community supported fisheries (CSFs) programs.
- Create lists of catering options that prioritize local food for circulation to City support staff and to those renting City facilities, which may be incorporated into the Social Procurement Policy.
- Work with local agencies to match families with ways to support local farms through volunteering in exchange for food.
- Consider ways to support landowners who have access to land to increase their food production and grow food to share with the community.
- Explore opportunities to support and expand local economic development initiatives that are inclusive of agriculture.

Goal #5 - Recognize and Support Indigenous Food Sovereignty

5.1 Acknowledge Indigenous Territories in food gathering and harvesting

Actions:

- Recognize Snuneymuxw and Snaw-Naw-As traditional harvesting practices and use areas for accessing traditional foods.
- Honour Coast Salish indigenous protocols in accessing traditional foods.
- Provide education to the public and City Staff about traditional harvesting rights.
- Promote partnerships between Indigenous knowledge holders and community serving organizations seeking to practice traditional harvesting.

5.2 Preserve and Promote Traditional Knowledge

- Identify traditional foods Indigenous foods when seeking to use food as cultural supports.
- Help to preserve traditional knowledge about food preservation and processing.
- Supports skills and education around traditional food harvesting/processing.
- Provide knowledge and resources to homeless and vulnerable population service providers to explain what is considered culturally significant foods for local Indigenous populations (while recognizing individual dietary preferences will vary).

5.3 Enhance Resources that Support Indigenous Wellbeing

- Continue to acquire, construct and promote fishing docks and public access points to both fresh and salt water.
- Continue to support salmon enhancement projects in riverside/oceanfront parks and promote freshwater lake stocking.
- Continue to acquire parkland in locations that support the health and protection of water and food systems for future generations.
- Where possible and appropriate, include Indigenous plants in ecosystem restoration.
- Continue to highlight Indigenous plants and traditional uses where appropriate in park signage.
- Consider mapping and marketing opportunity locations to collect and grow Indigenous food throughout the park system
- Work with the NFPC to identify resources for collective action to create an Indigenous dietician position for mid-Island through Island Health/First Nations Health Authority.

APPENDIX 1 - ONGOING FOOD PRODUCTION INITIATIVES

In Nanaimo, numerous community food security initiatives are already established on private, school district and City-owned land. Below is a listing of the initiatives that are specifically on City land*.

Chart 1 - Current Food Production/Food Marketing Initiatives on City-owned Land*

Initiative on City owned Land	Description	Agreement in place between community and city of Nanaimo to govern use	Start-up funding and costs	Year established	Approximate Area (m2) currently used for urban agriculture
Beaufort Park Community Garden	This centrally located community garden was established following an overall park improvement process and plan. Land was cleared of invasive plants and garden plots were installed in collaboration with neighbourhood volunteers. The community rents allotment plots for a nominal fee. Amenities include garden plots, shed and tools and water source (hose bib).	Yes. First managed by neighbours and now managed by the Nanaimo Community Gardens Association.	PIP funds and community support	2007	600
Beaufort Park Food Forest	Edible trees and plants planted adjacent to the community garden. A bug hotel and community education materials are also on site. Currently limited water available (rainwater collection). Opportunities for public harvesting.	Yes. Managed by the Nanaimo Horticulture Society.	City Urban forestry funds, my CDC grant, and community support	2017	2000
Smugglers Park Community Garden (DIGS—Douglas Island Garden Society)	This large community garden on Protection Island was established through the partners in Park program. The idea was resident driven and took advantage of underutilized and overgrown parkland that had a rare, sunny aspect and was an ideal	Yes. Managed by DIGS.	PIP funds and community support over a	Started in 2008	1300

	location for food production. This large garden features allotment and community plots. The site has water and irrigation as well as other amenities. The garden has created a community gathering spot and is programmed to teach residents of all ages about the benefits of local food production.		few phases.		
Pawson Park Community garden	Garden was developed following an overall park improvement planning process. Accessible beds were installed at the time to be accessed by a former long-term care facility. Storage of tools is in an adjacent washroom/storage facility.	Yes, managed by the Nanaimo Old City Association	Park improvement capital funds and community support	2012	150
Beban Urban Garden Society (BUGS)	Initiated by the Vancouver Island Exhibition (VIEEX). Allotment and community beds.	Yes, Managed by the VIEEX under license agreement.	PIP funds and community support	2010	1760
Demonstration gardens/pilot sites	In 2020, an ornamental rose bed beside the social centre was converted into a food producing area to demonstrate that food can be grown in small places in 2020. This is a completely community bed and all food can be gleaned by the public. In previous years, beds at SARC, City Hall, Beban and the waterfront have had food integrated for demonstration and trial purposes.	Sites are maintained by city horticulturalists	Park operation budget	various	
Beban Greenhouse and Community/	Initiated by the Nanaimo Community Gardens Association. This group was looking for a new home after utilizing	Yes. Site is managed by the Nanaimo	Pip funds, Co-op	2017	2535

Learning Gardens	greenhouses at the RDN's sewage treatment plan for years. The RDN's greenhouses were removed as part of treatment plant expansion. Greenhouses, compost facilities, pollinator gardens and bee/insect resources, and planted beds were developed to replace these operations at Beban Park. There are allotment beds as well as several community beds where harvest is free to take.	Community Gardens Society.	community spaces grant, and community support		
Island Roots Market	Market has been located on a few locations at Beban Park under various use agreements. Currently a year round outdoor market with intentions to create a covered site at Beban Park.	Yes, currently managed by the Island Roots Market.	Island Roots cooperative		
Forest Drive Gyro Park	Garden beds, shed and tools were identified and installed as part of a larger park improvement process. Along with the upgrading of other park amenities, the goal of the garden was to create more community use and gathering at this park site. A mix of allotment and community beds.	Yes. Managed by local neighbours.	PIP funds and community support	2013	185
South End Community Food Forest	Community driven improvements on undeveloped city road right of way off Haliburton St. Overgrown vegetation and deleterious materials were removed and edible landscapes were planted. The entire site can be harvested by the community.	Yes. Agreement in place with the South End Community Association	Community support, my cdc coop grant, and developer community amenity contributions.	2016	425

Remnant fruit trees	Several historic fruit trees have been planted in park improvement initiatives or left in place as homesteads have subdivided. le) Arbutus Park, Fern Park, Wardropper Park, Bowen Park, Barsby Park, Piper's Lagoon, Harewood Centennial Park	No formal agreements in place. Neighbours and volunteers glean seasonally and park operations staff maintain trees.	NA	NA	
Vancouver Island Exhibition	For many years, the city has provided a location and facilitated use agreements to promote their agricultural activities and events at Beban Park as well as supporting the Nanaimo Equestrian Association at the site	Yes			Central part of Beban Park

** Each of these locations has unique challenges that need to be overcome for success. Common challenges include sufficient water supply for production, appropriate growing mediums, social challenges and behaviors, aesthetic opinions, critters, gleaning, volunteer stewards moving away or not maintaining sites long term, and safety.*

Appendix 2 - Opportunities for Future Food Production on City Land

Chart 2-Potential sites for future production. These sites have projects underway to increase food production.

Initiative on City owned Land	Description	Agreement in place between community and city of Nanaimo to govern use	Start-up funding and costs	Year established	Approximate Area (m2) currently used for urban agriculture
933 Park Ave	Purchase of a former 5 acre farm homestead for nature park, environmental protection, storm water mgt, housing and urban farming purposes. Future land use planning processes to be conducted.	Yes. Short-term agreement in place with Nanaimo Food share for a portion of the site until Sept 2021.	\$1.38 million to acquire property.	2019	5950
East Wellington Park	<p>Parkland acquisition and planning process underway for the 12.7 ha site including goals of urban agriculture, environmental enhancement, flood mitigation and recreation.</p> <p>This property is Nanaimo's only property in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).</p> <p>An agricultural capability assessment for this site is underway with a consultant. Also a Millstone River Side Channel Feasibility study is underway with a consultant team.</p>	No agreements in place yet, but discussions have occurred with community partners such as Nanaimo Foodshare and Vancouver Island University.	Land exchange and money to acquire property. Production efforts will be more.	2011-present	None yet

Appendix 3 – Local Programs Related to Food Production

Chart 3- Food production/stewardship programs and events typically offered by Parks Recreation and Culture and marketed through Activity guides and social media. However, some are on hold in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Course title	Partner
Urban Foraging Walk	Nanaimo Food share
Fruit tree pruning (basic, advanced, summer)	Nanaimo Foodshare
Building Soil	PRC Contractor and Nanaimo Community Gardens
Making Fertilizer	PRC Contractor
Organic Gardening	PRC Contractor
Pests in the organic garden	PRC Contractor
Starting from Seed	PRC Contractor
Natural Landscaping for Climate Change	PRC Contractor
Permaculture	PRC Contractor
Forest Gardening	PRC Contractor
Event title	Partner
Rivers Day	DFO, SFN, Island Fly fishers, City of Nanaimo, Nanaimo hatchery,
Family Fishing days	City of Nanaimo, BC freshwater fisheries, fish for fun
Earth day/Wild Foods	School District 68, My CDC, RDN, City of Nanaimo, NALT
Agro and bio blitzes	At various park sites with City and community partners
Oceans Day	City of Nanaimo, DFO, SFN, Port Authority

Appendix 4 – Current City Policies and Plan Related to Urban Agriculture

Regional Agricultural Area Plan

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) began an Agricultural Area Plan process in 2011 to support, preserve, and enhance viable agriculture and food production in the Nanaimo region. Although this plan is focussed on the Nanaimo Region, it does identify Beban Park in the City of Nanaimo as a regional agriculture centre. The idea of promoting agricultural and aquaculture events, markets and festivals at Beban Park is also supported by this plan.

Official Community Plan (OCP)

Nanaimo's OCP is currently undergoing an update process; however, the current plan does support food security. Policies promote sustainable community development through local food systems and urban agriculture, partnerships, private sector collaborations, and access to affordable and healthy food. The use of incentives to encourage developers to provide lands for urban agriculture and development of strategies around food is also supported.

Urban Forestry Plan

Developed in 2012, Nanaimo's Urban Forestry Plan recognizes edible landscapes. The plan supports the idea of fruit and nut-bearing trees, as well as edible plants, being integrated into Nanaimo's urban forest and parks.

Beban Park Master Plan Update

Developed in 2015, this plan supports the expanded use of this destination park campus for food security. Urban agriculture is identified as an emerging land-use opportunity to integrate into the park fabric and showcase to regional park visitors.

Partners in Parks Program

This public participation program, developed in the 1980s, promotes community driven initiatives to improve underutilised city land. Resourcing and funding is available to community groups to improve city-owned land through neighbourhood improvement processes. Many existing community gardens in parks have developed through this program since 2007.

City of Nanaimo Community Garden Policy

Developed in 2009, this policy allows City staff to collaborate with interested groups to develop community gardens. Consultation processes, garden development, and management agreements are outlined in the policy.

Parks Recreation and Culture Master Plan and Horticulture Strategy Nanaimo's Parks Recreation and Culture Master Plan (2005) and Horticulture Strategy (2005) are undergoing updates and will reflect food security trends and community needs. Food security and production on city lands were not key themes when these policies were developed.

Appendix 5 - Additional Resources

<https://bcfoodsecuritygateway.ca/resources/food-security-in-a-pandemic/>

<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/Emergency/MajorEvents/Documents/Emergency-Food-Services-Planning-for-Disasters.pdf>

https://foodsecurecanada.org/resources-news/resources-research/municipal-food-policy-entrepreneurs?gclid=EAIaIQobChMlvOTDqNa-6gIVnCCtBh0TbQxkEAAYASAAEgILM_D_BwE

<https://www.markwinne.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/FPC-manual.pdf>

<https://www.fnha.ca/WellnessSite/WellnessDocuments/FNHA-Planning-for-Food-Security-A-Toolkit-for-the-COVID-19-Pandemic.pdf>

DRAFT

ATTACHMENT C

Parks, Recreation and Culture – Food Security Actions Underway

Immediate Actions (Fall 2020)	Responsibility	Funding required
Completion of the Agricultural Capability Assessment at East Wellington Park and Side Channel Feasibility study	PRC	Already committed in 2020 budgets
Share this strategy to all community partners growing food in parks and discuss opportunities to better coordinate	PRC	None
Work with community partners and park operations staff to distribute any excess fall harvest grown in park locations to food banks	PRC	none
Continue to promote food and stream stewardship at community events (i.e.) Rivers' Day	PRC	Already in budget
Short term actions (2021)		
If appropriate, convert additional ornamental beds into vegetable demonstration beds or public gleaning	PRC	Through operations
Complete schedule of a schedule for planting, gleaning and foraging	PRC	Already underway
Install irrigation at Beaufort Park food forest and community gardens to facilitate growing and garden expansion	PRC	Kirsty will have to check with Park operations. In draft 2021 budgets
Completion and adoption of the East Wellington Park Management Plan	PRC	Already underway. Completion through ReImagine.
Initiation and completion of a land use plan for 933 Park Ave	PRC and Community Planning	\$20,000

Complete GIS map locating edible trees on public land where public can glean	PRC, Urban Forestry, GIS	Already underway
Complete GIS map layer locating community beds where the public can pick food. Also publish in PRC marketing materials	PRC, GIS	nominal
Create GIS map layer for fishing docks and boat launch locations. These are already on PRC brochures and databases but not on internal GIS	PRC, GIS	nominal
Create signage to identify community beds and food forests in public spaces where the public can pick food	PRC	\$5000
Work to better market all the food initiatives already ongoing in parks via social media, newsletters, website	PRC	nominal
Long term actions		
Develop interpretive materials/signage for community gardens and edible landscapes	PRC	\$20,000
Develop the central area of Beban Park with integrated agricultural opportunities as per the Beban Park Master Plan	PRC and partners	Future capital planning

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

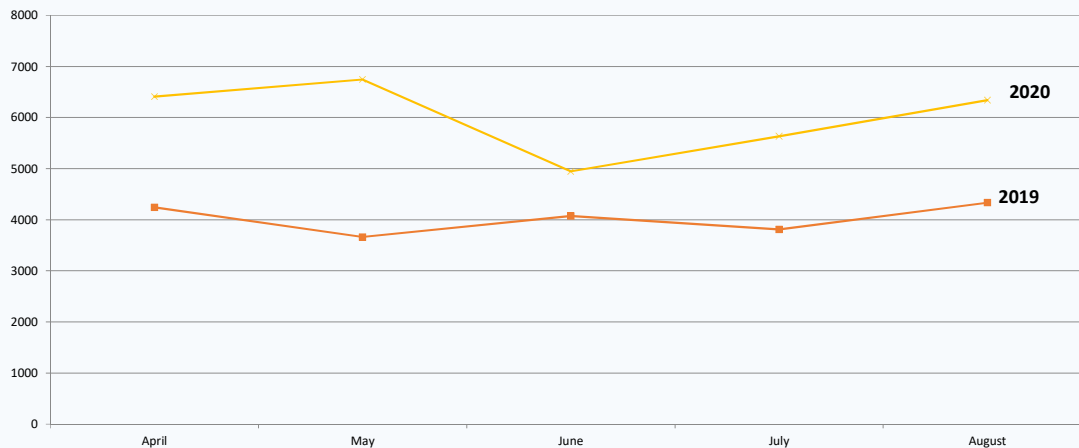
Emergency Food Trends During COVID

- 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:

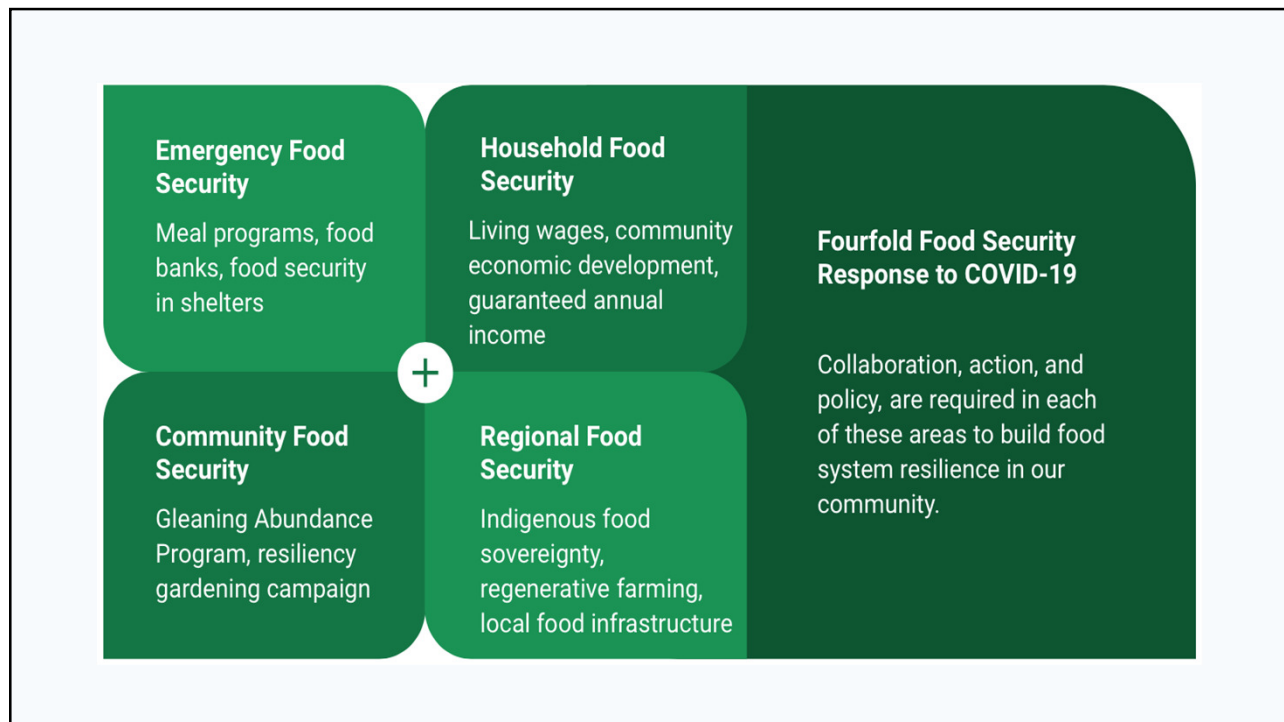
- Crisis a reminder of community dependence on imported food and global supply chain and the importance of locally produced food
- Emergency also showed ability of providers to collaborate especially when there is a regular opportunity to convene and share resources

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