



Making Food Matter

Putting Food and Food Policy On the Table

Food Policy and Planning April 2007 Update

Thanks to the hard work of a broad range of individuals, organizations and agencies much progress has been made. As we near the end of Phase 2 of *Putting Food and Food Policy on the Table*, we have taken considerable steps forward in each of our strategic areas of focus. Below is an outline of the work that has been done in each of the strategic areas. Currently each of the working session facilitators is preparing a report outlining their activities as well as partnerships identified or formed, actions identified or taken and outcomes.

We are turning our attention to planning “Food Matters!”: An Annual Regional Forum on Food Security. This will be an opportunity to hear back on the progress made over the year, work on building linkages and prioritizing actions to further fill out our planning for the next year, as well as celebrate the hard work that has taken place and recognizing key actors in the process.

Many thanks to all of the individuals who participated, and to supporters: VanCity, Vancouver Island Health Authority's “Community Food Action Initiative” through ActNow BC - the government of BC's investment in promoting healthy choices through a partnership-based, community-focused approach to improve nutrition, increase physical activity and reduce tobacco use and the CRD Roundtable on the Environment Healthy Communities Subcommittee.

Summary of Working Sessions

Local Food Purchasing Policies

Champion: Jane Sterk, Esquimalt Council/ Liaison Mike Romaine

A series of meetings occurred that discussed the benefits of developing local purchasing policies, some of the challenges and opportunities. There was the need identified to develop and provide support and tools to businesses, agencies and institutions that would enable them to look at their policies and consider what products they could replace with local goods, and to develop or strengthen their purchasing policies towards this end. One of the barriers identified was the actual production capacity on the island and the access to consistent quantity and quality supply. Individuals who attended the meeting are conducting follow-up work within their respective agencies. A number of possible pilots have been

identified including pilots with the Esquimalt Food Services and the University of Victoria as well as exploring possible future opportunities within VIHA.

Expansion of Local Pocket Markets

Champion and Liaison: Lee Fuge

Over twenty people from communities across the region attended the working session held at the Vic West Y on the same evening as the Vic West Farmers Market. The participants toured the Vic West Market and community gardens then got down to the business of learning about “pocket markets”. Currently, there are four active pocket markets: Vic West, Camosun Interurban, Camosun Lansdowne and U Vic. Representatives of several groups have expressed interest in working towards establishing pocket markets or larger farmers markets (with 11 potential sites currently being explored). Many different types of locations are contemplated such as the recently held pocket market in the foyer of the Ministry of Community Services. At the close of the meeting the group identified a number of activities that would support pocket market development. An application was also made to VanCity to support FoodRoots (working with LifeCycles) to create Pocket Market Tool kits, provide volunteer training, and provide general market development support. Other options are also being investigated to bring the necessary resources to this endeavor to support the interest and momentum.

Benefits of Urban Agriculture and Municipal Role

Champion: Sonya Chandler /Liaison: Linda Geggie

In January a presentation was made to the City of Victoria on the benefits of urban agriculture and the potential role for municipal governments. Part of the presentation identified key ways the City could support urban agriculture through things that are already priorities or things they are putting resources and energy towards (such as the Review of the Parks Master Plan). Following up from this presentation, a resolution on Urban Agriculture was created and presented by Councilor Sonya Chandler on March 15, 2007 and was passed by Council ([see Urban Agriculture Resolution](#)).

In addition, we promoted participation in the Parks Master Plan public engagement review process on March 17, 2007, and will continue to research and monitor issues and challenges around the implementation of an Urban Agriculture policy.

Food Access - Neighborhood Based Food Action Planning

Champion: Kezia Cowtan/Liaison Linda Geggie

The session was attended by three neighborhood groups who shared information about their distinct neighborhood assets and needs, how they have initiated their planning processes, and how they are engaging community members in this process (Tsartlip First Nation, Vic West, and Fernwood). A number of students and a few representatives from other communities (Western Communities, Christmas Hill) interested in the process also attended. A report is being prepared on what was learned, what are the next steps as well as what was recommended by the communities for support for this type of neighborhood planning processes.

Food Education and Mapping

Champions: Tina Fraser Baynes and Tara Taggart, Canadian Cancer Agency

Preliminary planning meetings were held and on March 21, 2007, a session was held with the following goals:

- Provide the opportunity for people and organizations that are doing work in education or training around food and health to meet and hear about each other's work and the resources they develop, utilize or recommend;
- Develop a resource list of services and resources available in the Region;
- Determine if there are things we can better coordinate or work together on.

The scope of the session covered both Education and Training initiatives:

- Education (around the food system, importance of localized diets, healthy eating and diets, food and well-being, organic and natural growing practices etc., local food economy and value chains etc.);
- Skills Training (in the areas of Farm apprenticeships, Farming and business training, gardening and composting, food preparation and planning, processing and canning, animal husbandry etc.).

A resource list of the education and training initiatives presented is currently being created and will be available as a resource. The educators and trainers also discussed ways they could work together on a collaborative public education initiative.

Food Processing

Champion: Pat Reichert

A small focus group has seeded an idea to facilitate supply relationships through a pilot that is linked with strategic work being done around local procurement policies. This pilot would provide a venue and process to bring local farmers,

farmers who are adding value to their produce, and secondary processors together with one or more institutions to discuss a supply relationship.

The focus group would begin by forming relationships in a “warm” climate. This refers to institutions who are already interested in expanding their access to local product and to producers and processors who are at a level of interest and capacity. The focus group would be aiming to move the conversation beyond the barriers of supply relationships to a conversation focused on working through the challenges. The role of CR-FAIR/CRD HCSC would be to identify the potential players (institutions/farmers/processors), bring them together, and support the problem-solving process by bringing ideas, potential partners and resources to the table.

In addition, CR-FAIR would look at this process as a microcosm of opportunity. How can this experience be replicated and in particular what types of things are necessary to support the creation of a network of relationships and possibly infrastructure? CR-FAIR members are in the process of identifying the potential players and will further develop the concept of the supply relationship pilot.

Preserving the Land, Preserving the Farmer

Champions: Kevin Brown, Ramona Scott and Mike Romaine

This working group is compiling information from various reports that outline the issues, assets and opportunities for action around the preservation and use of farmland as well as the economic viability of farming. Once complete, working group members will forward the information to the Peninsula Agriculture Commission (PAC) and other constituents to seek advice and comments on the analysis. As well, the group will ask the PAC to identify any priority areas and suggest priority actions.

This information will inform CR-FAIR of the key pieces to ensure to carry forward in the Food and Health action planning process and how CR-FAIR might focus efforts in the next few years. These findings will be brought to the Food Matters Forum in May.

Advancement of the Food Charter and Food Policy Council

Champions: Mike Romaine and Paula Hesje

Considerable thought and research has been done in building a foundation of knowledge from which to base work on the advancement of a Food Policy Council (FPC) for the Region. In February, Paula Hesje and Mike Romaine presented information on the past and current status of Food Policy Council development in communities across BC and Canada to the *Putting Food and Food Policy on the Table* Steering Committee.

In particular, research was presented in a paper that outlined organizational structure options for food policy councils. Paula is currently working on a grid that will provide a Comparison of the Toronto, Ottawa, Kamloops, Vancouver and Prince George models. Work is continuing on models, but it was determined that first we must have a clear vision of what the CRD needs a FPC to do. A Food Policy Council Discussion Paper has been created and is currently being circulated to inform the process. A joint meeting of the HCSC and CR-FAIR has been held to discuss the concepts put forward. Recommendations will be brought forward to the Food Matters Forum in May.

For more information on any of these subjects, please contact:

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