

Goal 4: Increase Access to Health, Culturally Diverse and Affordable Food – focuses on improving access to food by vulnerable groups; and

Goal 5: Ensure the Food System is Consistent with Ecological Health – focuses on supporting healthy functioning ecosystems in order to support the goods and services we take for granted (e.g., pure water, clean air, climate regulation, nutrient cycling, pollination and wildlife habitat).

The Strategy also identifies implementation methods, including the creation of an Action Plan to be used to keep focus on the Strategy itself and to determine the effectiveness of the Strategy in reaching its identified goals. Using an Action Plan was determined to be an effective method in determining the regional effort in supporting food systems and, of similar importance, in determining what gaps exist and ways they can be addressed. From Surrey's perspective, engaging in the preparation of the Action Plan was very beneficial in quantifying Surrey's significant contribution to a regional food system, as well as providing an understanding as to where efforts can be adjusted to ensure the continued function and viability of Surrey's Agricultural Land Reserve and agriculture industry.

DISCUSSION

In early 2015, Metro Vancouver created a Regional Task Force responsible for preparing an Action Plan for the Strategy. Along with representation from the Ministry of Agricultural, Metro Vancouver and nine other municipalities, Surrey was a key player in the Task Force which met four times over the past 12 months.

The Task Force was responsible for filling several key roles including:

- advising Metro Vancouver staff on the scope of the Action Plan and the types and number of actions to be included in it;
- identifying gaps in the Strategy that were missed when it was originally prepared;
- identifying priority actions related to the Strategy's five goals from the perspective of each municipality; and
- identifying how the Strategy could be used and implemented effectively by recommending new actions to address identified gaps.

Through this process, a draft Action Plan was prepared using specific content provided by each participating municipality, including approved policies and projects currently underway or anticipated to begin within five years. Over the course of several months staff reviewed the draft Action Plan and provided comments and edits. Once the Action Plan was substantially complete, the document was reviewed by internal Metro Vancouver Committees and on November 27, 2015 the Metro Vancouver Board adopted a resolution to receive the draft Action Plan for information and convey the document to member municipalities for their review and comment.

Staff has reviewed the most recent draft Action Plan and recommend additional minor amendments, as follows:

- Goal 1.1 – the timelines for "Address truck parking on agricultural land" and "Conduct research and implement Farm Home Plate regulations" should both be changed to "Ongoing" rather than "Next 5 Years" as both are currently underway.
- Goal 1.2 – the timeline for "Develop new Riparian Area Development Permit Guidelines to protect fish bearing salmon" should be changed to "Ongoing" as this a current joint project between the Planning and Development Department and Engineering Department.
- Goal 1.3 – the items "Implement Farm Protection Development Permit guidelines" and "develop a road design criteria for farmland" should be broken into two separate items as the Farm Protection Guidelines are complete and currently being implemented and establishing road design criteria is anticipated to take place over the next five years.
- Goal 2.3 – the timeline for "Support alternative food/retail distribution models" should be adjusted to "Next 5 Years" as this project has not yet commenced.
- Goal 2.5 – the timeline for "Update Sustainability Charter" should be adjusted to "Ongoing" as the update is well underway and expected to be completed early 2016.

City staff will collaborate with Metro Vancouver staff to include the suggested amendments in the final Action Plan after Council has had the opportunity to review the document. The draft Action Plan was also reviewed by Surrey's Agricultural and Food Security Advisory Committee on January 14, 2016, without comment.

The draft Action Plan is not a regulatory document, but rather a means by which individual municipalities can work collectively on regional food system issues. A number of initiatives by the City of Surrey are highlighted in the Action Plan including:

- Goal 1 – restore and enhance riparian and fish habitat;
- Goal 1 – create a virtual incubator farm system to connect potential farmers with ag-related resources;
- Goal 1 – establish ag-based research and develop food production methods and models;
- Goal 2 – support alternative food or retail distribution models;
- Goal 4 – continue to support trips to local farms for refugee families; and
- Goal 4 – fund, support and maintain residents' access to community gardens.

The Action Plan seeks to balance the concerns and issues of commercial agriculture with those of urban agriculture and food security. Some of the highlighted actions are more relevant to the City of Surrey than others, but there is no expectation that member municipalities will implement all of the highlighted actions.

It is expected that a final draft of the Action Plan will be completed in Spring 2016 once stakeholders have reviewed the document and provided feedback to Metro Vancouver staff. Staff will continue to collaborate with Metro Vancouver in completing the final document.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

From a sustainability perspective, contributing to the viability of Surrey's food system is supported in several of Surrey's policy documents including the Official Community Plan, Agriculture Protection and Enhancement Strategy and the Sustainability Charter:

Official Community Plan

- Section D1: Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Management
- Section D3: Greener Site Development
- Section E3: Agriculture

Agriculture Protection and Enhancement Strategy

- Strategy 3.1: Investigate ways of improving access to an adequate and safe water supply.
- Strategy 5.2: Encourage producers to diversify crops and agricultural operations to maintain a balanced and resilient food system as needed.

Sustainability Charter

- SC14: Support Food Security
- EC12: Enhance and Promote Surrey's Agricultural Land Base
- EN9: Sustainable Land Use Planning and Development Practices
- EN12: Enhancement and Protection of Natural Areas, Fish Habitat and Wildlife Habitat
- EN16: Land, Water and Air Quality Management

CONCLUSION

Metro Vancouver's draft Regional Food System Action Plan is intended to be used as an implementation method to further the goals of the Regional Food System Strategy. Municipalities in the Lower Mainland experience myriad issues in maintaining a viable, efficient and effective food system. Understanding these issues, partnering with municipalities experiencing similar challenges and moving toward closing gaps that exist will go a long way to ensuring the Metro Vancouver region remains sustainable, healthy and vibrant as it continues to grow and evolve into the future.

Original signed by
Jean Lamontagne
General Manager
Planning and Development

CS:saw

Attachments

Appendix "I" Draft Regional Food System Action Plan

October 30, 2015

Regional Food System Action Plan - Draft



DRAFT

Table of Contents

Overview	4
Role of Local Governments in the Regional Food System	5
Challenges	7
Key Findings	7
A Special Mention – Community Groups, Non-governmental Organizations & Health Agencies	8
What’s In the Action Plan	9
Goal 1 Increase Capacity to Produce Food Close to Home	10
Planned Actions.....	10
New Initiatives for Local Governments.....	15
Goal 2 Improve the Financial Viability of the Food Sector	16
Planned Actions.....	16
New Initiatives for Local Governments.....	20
Goal 3 People Make Healthy and Sustainable Food Choices	22
Planned Actions.....	22
New Initiatives for Local Governments.....	26
Goal 4 Access to Healthy, Culturally Diverse & Affordable Food	27
Planned Actions.....	27
New Initiatives for Local Governments.....	31
Goal 5 A Food System Consistent With Ecological Health	32
Planned Actions.....	32
New Initiatives for Local Governments.....	36
Emerging issues in the regional food system	37
Monitoring Progress	39

Overview

The *Regional Food System Strategy* (RFSS) was adopted by Metro Vancouver in 2011, with a vision to create, “a sustainable, resilient and healthy food system that will contribute to the well-being of all residents and the economic prosperity of the region while conserving our ecological legacy.” This food system approach illustrates the multiple ways food reaches our plates and the linkages among agencies, the private sector and communities working on food issues. The RFSS contains five goals and twenty-one strategies (Table 1) that highlights opportunities for all levels of government, the private sector and civil society to advance actions that support the vision and public benefits derived from the regional food system.

The Action Plan recognizes what municipal governments and the regional district are doing to advance the RFSS goals and strategies and through new initiatives strengthen collaboration on actions to address agri-food issues. The plan takes stock of the great work undertaken to date by local governments in Metro Vancouver, and charts a course for where the region is headed over the next five years. Local governments have identified the actions in this plan and the new initiatives being proposed respond to gaps and emerging directions.

The Action Plan:

- Demonstrates the local government role through current and planned actions;
- Identifies areas of the RFSS where more local government efforts are desirable;
- Recommends opportunities for collaborative action;
- Highlights actions that could be expanded across the region; and
- Provides a resource to learn from each other as well signals where new partnerships can be pursued to address food system issues.

The Action Plan was developed by Metro Vancouver and its members through a Task Force under the direction of the Regional Planning Advisory Committee, with participation from eleven municipalities, the Tsawwassen First Nation and the BC Ministry of Agriculture. Input was also provided by other municipalities, the Metro Vancouver Agricultural Advisory Committee a series of three Roundtable events hosted by Metro Vancouver in 2013 and 2014.

The results of the consultation with municipalities have produced an Action Plan that highlights:

- Over 175 planned actions planned by local governments to advance RFSS implementation;
- Where local governments are most active in the food system: protecting agricultural land, supporting direct marketing, aligning policies to food system goals, enabling food access for vulnerable groups, and encouraging urban agriculture;
- Reveals gaps and activities that are not widely pursued such as: using farmland for food production, supporting new farmers, facilitating local food processing capacity, increasing awareness of local food, promoting food recovery, and preparing for impacts of climate change; and
- Emerging issues that have become more pertinent since the RFSS was completed in 2011 and requires local government attention: food emergency planning; linking poverty, food & health issues; and establishing a forum for municipal staff to share information and collaborate on new initiatives.

Table 1: The Regional Food System Strategy Framework

GOALS	STRATEGIES
Goal 1: Increased Capacity to Produce Food Close to Home	1.1 Protect agricultural land for food production
	1.2 Restore fish habitat and protect sustainable sources of seafood
	1.3 Enable expansion of agricultural production
	1.4 Invest in a new generation of food producers
	1.5 Expand commercial food production in urban areas
Goal 2: Improve the Financial Viability of the Food Sector	2.1 Increase capacity to process, warehouse and distribute local foods
	2.2 Include local foods in the purchasing policies of large public institution
	2.3 Increase direct marketing opportunities for local foods
	2.4 Further develop value chains within the food sector
	2.5 Review government policies and programs to ensure they enable the expansion of the local food sector
Goal 3: People Make Healthy and Sustainable Food Choices	3.1 Enable residents to make healthy food choices
	3.2 Communicate how food choices support sustainability
	3.3 Enhance food literacy and skills in school
	3.4 Celebrate the taste of local foods and the diversity of cuisines
Goal 4: Everyone has Access to Healthy, Culturally Diverse and Affordable Food	4.1 Improve access to nutritious food among vulnerable groups
	4.2 Encourage urban agriculture
	4.3 Enable non-profit organizations to recover nutritious food
Goal 5: A Food System Consistent with Ecological Health	5.1 Protect and enhance ecosystem goods and services
	5.2 Reduce waste in the food system
	5.3 Facilitate adoption of environmentally sustainable practices
	5.4 Prepare for the impacts of climate change

Role of Local Governments in the Regional Food System

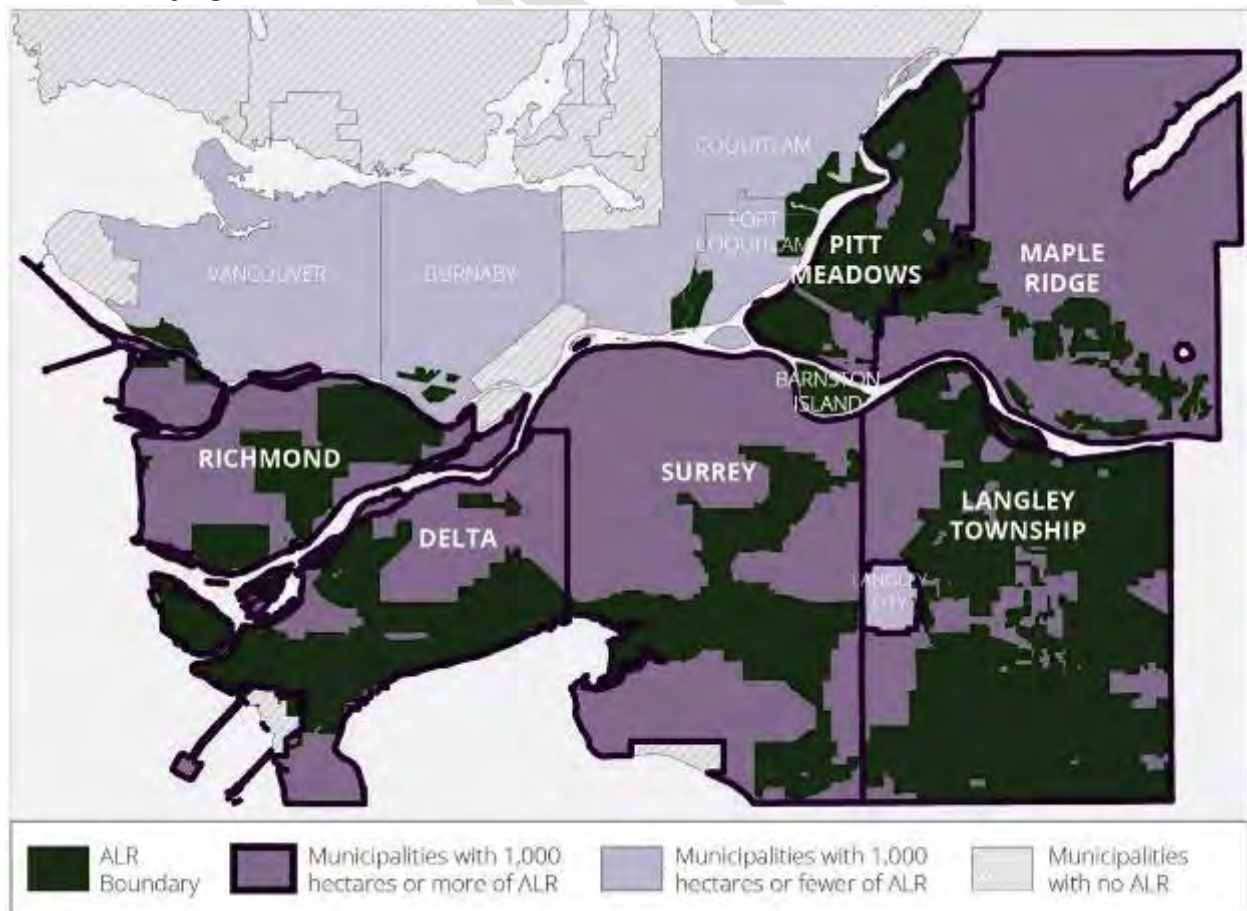
Food system policy spans government, private sector and community organizations, yet necessitates government leadership at all levels. The federal government has authority over national and international issues related to trade, agriculture, fisheries, health, and food safety. The Province of British Columbia shares the government mandate for agriculture and health, while having authority over economic growth, job creation, social welfare, transportation and the environment.

Local governments are more directly connected to communities and therefore are well-positioned to address food system issues related to land use, utilities and community services. Municipalities capitalize on their strengths to manage growth and development, diversify the economy, educate residents, support vulnerable communities and adapt to a changing environment. Metro Vancouver provides regional utility services for water, wastewater and solid waste and undertakes regional planning with an aim to directing growth to the right places, support the development of complete communities, protect important lands and support the provision efficient infrastructure, including transportation.

In Metro Vancouver, the combined efforts of the regional district, the 21 member municipalities and Tsawwassen First Nation creates a collective approach that can effectively address a wide range of food system issues. There remains a strong reliance on the provincial government to enable the policy, regulatory and fiscal framework. Partnerships with business, community organizations and educational institutions are also essential to advancing innovative solutions to address the challenges in the regional food system.

The Action Plan acknowledges a distinctive role for local governments in Metro Vancouver, but recognizes that each local government has unique characteristics and circumstances and therefore addresses food issues in its own way. For example, local governments with significant agricultural land play a crucial role in protecting farmland and promoting the viability of agriculture. The map below illustrates that six municipal governments retain 95% of the region’s agricultural land (Delta, Langley Township, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Richmond, and Surrey). For the purposes of the Action Plan, these municipalities are referred to as the “Agricultural” municipalities. Although other municipalities are also stewards of the Agricultural Land Reserve, most of the remaining lands are located with the Urban Containment Boundary, as defined by *Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping our Future (Metro 2040)*, the regional growth strategy.

Distribution of Agricultural Land Reserve in Metro Vancouver



Challenges

The challenges identified in the RFSS remain pertinent today - supporting healthier diets, reducing the carbon footprint of food, preparing for uncertain global food supplies, and creating opportunities for local food businesses. The ability of government agencies to work across multiple jurisdictions to capture synergies also remains a challenge as governments wrestle with new and emerging impacts on the food system.

Through the development of the Action Plan, municipalities expressed a strong desire to ensure that: healthy food is available to everyone, local agri-food businesses thrive, agricultural land is protected, and associated ecological goods and services are maintained over the long term. Additional challenges faced by local governments in responding to local food issues identified during the development of the Action Plan include the following:

- local governments having many competing priorities and obligations;
- there is a lack of adequate resources committed to food and agricultural issues;
- there is a lack of consistency in terms of where and how agri-food issues are addressed municipally, which makes it more difficult to coordinate among departments and across the region; and
- the range and diversity of levels of political commitment to a food system approach results in actions being completed only when staff time and funding become available, rather than being a strategic priority.

Key Findings

A number of notable themes emerged through the development of the Action Plan. First, it has been noted that the regional federation of local governments working collaboratively is an effective mechanism for building a resilient, sustainable regional food system. The Action Plan's success is reliant on the complementary relationships that allow each community to build on its own strengths and unique circumstances to address food issues, but also to work together on cross-cutting actions. Collective actions are more effective at resolving regional issues than if each municipality pursues actions in isolation. This Action Plan provides the opportunity to learn from the experiences of others, expand innovative approaches across the region and embark on new innovative initiatives to address the persistent challenges and emerging regional food system issues.

Next, the importance of the interdependent relationship between the 'feeder' communities who are producing local food, and the 'eater' communities who are primarily the consumers, cannot be overstated. For example, Agricultural municipalities are focused on protecting agricultural land and expanding commercial food production, while the remaining municipalities are engaged more in the social and educational benefits of urban agriculture. Together, local governments complement one another and allow the region to effectively, and jointly, advance local food production.

This approach still supports consistent actions across the region. For example, more effort could be made by all local governments to promote local food, which in turn supports the viability of agriculture. The best way to protect agricultural land is to farm it. Concurrently, Agricultural municipalities need to consider food insecurity issues that tend to be felt most in more urban communities that are struggling to enable an affordable, healthy food supply for vulnerable

populations. Strong connections among all communities can increase understanding of the issues that will confront the region in the future especially as climate change and emergency management take a higher priority on all government agendas.

Lastly, there is a wide range and diversity policies, plans and programs being implemented by local governments that directly engage with food and agriculture, yet these initiatives are often not labelled as such. In addition to the agriculture plans, food strategies and food charters prepared by municipalities, actions in support of a food system approach have emerged from a broad range of other policy tools such as Official Community Plans, zoning bylaws and development permit area guidelines. There are also supportive actions embedded in Local Area Plans, Park Plans, Climate Action Plans, Environmental and Social Sustainability Strategies, and Healthy Built Environment initiatives. Municipalities are responding to the growing interest in local food issues by using whatever tools and resources are available. While this less structured approach is quite nimble and flexible, it does hinder the ability to have a more strategic, integrated long-term approach that includes dedicated staff, funding, and partnerships.

A Special Mention – Community Groups, Non-governmental Organizations & Health Agencies

In addition to local governments, key players in the regional food system include non-governmental organizations, community groups, educational institutes, and the private sector. These groups are leading actions in support of the Regional Food System Strategy, and are crucial partners for local governments. Health Authorities also deserve special mention for their role in putting food on the public agenda and enabling communities to tackle food issues.

Most local governments rely on community organizations to be on the front lines for food insecurity issues. With senior governments continuing to reduce support for research and extension, agricultural producers are increasingly reliant on the educational institutions for job training and skills development. The University of British Columbia has been active in supporting changes in institutional procurement practices to include local foods. The connections between the private sector and local government are traditionally regulatory in nature, but are becoming more collaborative as businesses recognize social obligations and opportunities to be agents of change and as food issues become more complex. In addition, charitable organizations and foundations are providing critical community services and conducting public engagement and education activities.

What's In the Action Plan

The Action Plan uses the RFSS goals and strategies to present local government actions. Each of the five RFSS goals has a chapter that includes:

- **Local Government Role** – describes the current state of RFSS implementation in 2015 and the types of actions that have been completed since the adoption of the RFSS in 2011.
- **Planned Actions** – identifies specific actions local governments are planning to undertake within the next five years. These actions are occurring on an ongoing basis, in the short term (1-3 years) or in the medium term (3-5 years). The planned actions were identified by local government staff for their own jurisdictions. *These planned actions have been previously approved by local government decision-makers.*
- **New Initiatives for Local Governments** – identifies actions to address the current gaps in RFSS implementation, many which can be achieved collaboratively. *These recommended actions have not yet been endorsed by local government decision-makers.* There are two types of collaborative recommendations:
 - New actions. These actions harness the collaborative potential of local government to jointly address the identified gaps in the RFSS; and
 - Expansion of practices currently underway in one or more jurisdictions. These are initiatives that have the potential for broader application throughout the region.

Emerging Issues in the Regional Food System

The last chapter addresses actions that were not included in the original scope of the RFSS, but since 2011 have become more pertinent to local governments throughout the region.

What's not in the Action Plan

While the Action Plan focuses on what lies ahead, it is important to acknowledge that local governments have already adopted, funded and implemented a wealth of programs, upgrades and initiatives that support the regional food system. Such past actions have contributed to the strength of the regional food system today, and set the stage for the future actions identified in this plan. The past actions that were implemented prior to 2015 are not included in the scope of this plan.

Goal 1 *Increase Capacity to Produce Food Close to Home*

Goal 1 aims to expand the amount of food that can be commercially produced in the region. The five strategies under this goal address: agricultural land, fish habitat, avenues to invest in future farmers and the expansion of commercial food production in rural and urban areas. Protecting the agricultural land base is critical, but is only the first step – equally important is enabling farmers to operate a viable business and the use of agricultural lands for food production.

Local Government Role

Local governments are strongly engaged in responding to Goal 1 through policy and regulations for managing land use issues within their jurisdictions. Agricultural municipalities and Metro Vancouver are leading the way by protecting the region's agricultural land base, in support of the provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and the *Metro 2040* Agricultural land use designation. There are also ongoing efforts to expand the region's food production capacity both in rural and urban areas.

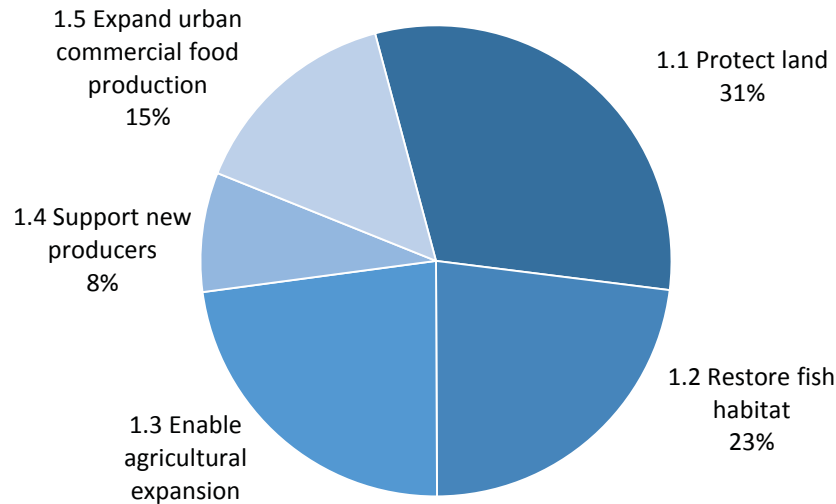
Since the adoption of the RFSS, local governments have undertaken actions such as:

- protecting agricultural land through the implementation of *Metro 2040*, including the policy limiting sewer connections on *Metro 2040* Agricultural and Rural designated lands, yet much of their efforts are spent addressing the everyday threats of non-farm use of agricultural lands.
- adopting guidelines to restore and enhance fish habitat;
- investigating options to increase actively farmed land or discourage non-farm uses in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR);
- continuing to address the deposition of illegal fill on farmland through municipal bylaws and enforcement activities;
- investing in irrigation and drainage infrastructure, at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars, to enable farmers to maintain expand food production in the ALR; and
- continuing to seek ways to facilitate commercial food production in urban areas.

Planned Actions

Local governments have identified 36 actions that are planned for the next five years to advance implementation of Goal 1. These planned actions include a mix of short-term, long-term and ongoing initiatives. The chart below illustrates the distribution of the actions planned in response to Goal 1 by local governments. Due to the combined efforts of the regional district, Agricultural and other municipalities, most of the activity is evenly distributed among the five strategies except for actions to support new producers.

Goal 1 - Planned Actions (2015-2020)



1.1 Protect agricultural land for food production

Local governments with agricultural lands continue to protect the region's farmland.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Respond to ongoing threats to agricultural land as a result of transportation and other infrastructure developments (e.g. South Fraser Perimeter Road)	Delta, Richmond	
Ensure the zoning and farm bylaws are consistent with the provincial "Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas"	Langley Township, Port Coquitlam, Richmond	
Address truck parking on agricultural land by investigating the feasibility of designated parking areas		Surrey
Conduct research and implement Farm Home Plate regulations		Surrey
Advocate for the preservation and enhancement of the ALR for food production and economic development	Burnaby, Surrey Vancouver, Richmond	
Lead a pilot project to seek preventative solutions to illegal fill deposition on farmland in partnership with all municipalities	Metro Vancouver	
Partner with the Ministry of Agriculture to update the Regional Agricultural Land Use Inventory with participation from member municipalities	Metro Vancouver	
Represent regional interests in regulatory and policy changes to provincial legislation and federal development proposals impacting agriculture.	Metro Vancouver	

1.2 *Restore fish habitat and protect sustainable sources of seafood*

Protecting, restoring and enhancing fish habitat is essential to sustaining commercial fisheries as well as protecting salmon for community and ceremonial use by First Nations. These actions represent only a small component of the broader aim to support sustainable sources of fish and seafood. Most local government with fish-bearing streams recognize the multiple values associated with protecting fish habitat and are actively involved in streamside enhancement projects.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Restore and enhance riparian and fish habitat, including partnering with community organizations	Burnaby, Langley Township, Maple Ridge, New Westminister, North Vancouver District, Port Moody, Richmond, Surrey, White Rock, Metro Vancouver	
Host, fund and in-kind support for celebratory and educational public events drawing attention to importance of fish habitat	Burnaby, Maple Ridge, New Westminister, North Vancouver District, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Surrey	
Implement Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) guidelines and watercourse protection regulations to protect fish bearing streams	Burnaby, Maple Ridge, New Westminister, Port Moody	
Develop new Riparian Area Development permit Guidelines to protect fish bearing streams		New Westminister, Surrey
Maintain fish programs for Capilano smolt trap and truck program to transport salmonid populations around Cleveland Dam)	Metro Vancouver	
Establish a fish migration & capture facilities (e.g. at Metro Vancouver new proposed hydroelectric facility at Cleveland Dam; sites in Maple Ridge)		Maple Ridge, Metro Vancouver
Establish, support or maintain fish hatcheries	Maple Ridge, Port Moody	

1.3 *Enable expansion of agricultural production*

There is much interest by all local governments in expanding commercial food production. Agricultural municipalities are continuing to invest in irrigation, drainage and other infrastructure projects and advance their agricultural plans, while many urban municipalities are supporting research to expand local food production on small lots.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Support the Kwantlen Polytechnic University's Southwest BC Bio-Region Food System Design Project that will explore the economic, environmental stewardship and food self-reliance of a bio-regional food system	Burnaby, Delta, Langley City, Langley Township, Maple Ridge, New Westminister, North Vancouver City, North Vancouver District, Pitt Meadows, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Tsawwassen First Nation, White Rock	Metro Vancouver
Continue to improve water infrastructure upgrades including activities such as dyke and pump upgrades and maintaining ditch conveyance	Pitt Meadows, Richmond, Delta	Surrey
Implement Farm Protection Development Permit guidelines and develop road design criteria for farmland		Surrey
Complete and implement Integrated Stormwater Management Plans for the entire City to prevent flooding of farmland		New Westminister, Surrey
Advance the Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan phase one that focuses on detailed design and on-site water management to enable farming activity		Richmond
Investigate farm property tax policies to identify options to encourage actively farmed land or discourage non-farm use of the ALR		Metro Vancouver

1.4 Invest in a new generation of food producers

The major barrier for new producers to starting a farm business is access to agricultural land and capital. Few local governments have identified taking a direct role in encouraging new farmers, except for three Agricultural municipalities that have put resources into establishing incubator farms and supporting business and skills training.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Support the Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation to host workshops to assist new farmers		Langley Township
Advance the Gardens Agricultural Park Plan for incubator farms and community gardens		Richmond
Advance the Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan through the development of the Agricultural Management Strategy using a "one farm, multiple farmers" approach		Richmond

Create a Virtual Incubator Farm Project Online system to connect potential farmers with agri-related resources		Surrey
Establish Agri-business Financial Literacy Program to provide accredited ag-business financial training for the John Volken Academy BioPod students		Surrey
Implement the Colebrook Park Master Plan that aims to create a leasing program for incubator farms on the agricultural land		Surrey
Host the Kwantlen Polytechnic University's Farm School initiative		Tsawwassen First Nation

1.5 Expand urban commercial food production in urban areas

Most municipalities are supporting increased commercial food production in urban areas.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Zoning and regulatory updates to further encourage agricultural production and allow urban farming		Burnaby, New Westminster, Vancouver
Secure tenure for the existing Loutet Farm in the Loutet Park and support the establishment of a new farm in the Sutherland Schoolyard	North Vancouver City	
Establish the Bio-Pod Initiative which is an Agricultural Training and Research Demonstration Greenhouse		Surrey
Support an Ag-Research Program to develop agri-technology and crop science R&D for the commercial greenhouse industry		Surrey
Support research and development into new food production methods / models		Surrey, Vancouver
Establish a Research and demonstration training facility		Surrey
Create policy to enable commercial food production in the City including a farming business license		Vancouver
Increase the number of urban farms in Vancouver from 17 to 35 by the year 2020 (backyard farms to mid-scale operations)		Vancouver
Facilitate development of Klee Wyck commercial food production facility through business licensing and other in-kind support		West Vancouver

New Initiatives for Local Governments

Local government responses to Goal 1 suggest that although there is significant activity across the region to protect agricultural land and expand commercial agricultural production, some gaps exist that can be addressed by increased collaboration among municipalities and Metro Vancouver, including:

- funding to support irrigation and drainage infrastructure necessary to maintain and expand food production in the Agricultural Land Reserve, especially in the face of climate change;
- few designated point of contact within municipalities to coordinate planning, programs and responses to local agricultural and food issues; and
- the ability of new farmers to access land and start a farm business.

The recommended actions to collaboratively address the gaps identified by local governments are:

New Actions	Agency	Timeline
1. Collectively advocate to senior governments for funding programs to expand investments in irrigation and drainage infrastructure necessary to adapt to climate change.	Metro Vancouver and Agricultural municipalities	1-3 years
Investigate feasibility of regional land trust to enable new farmers to access agricultural land.	Metro Vancouver and Agricultural municipalities	1-3 years
2. Expand municipal involvement in programs that enable new farmers to start a business such as Surrey's Virtual Incubator Farm Project Online system	All local governments	1-3 years

Goal 2 *Improve the Financial Viability of the Food Sector*

The aim of Goal 2 is to strengthen economic prosperity for farmers and the food industry by creating opportunities to distribute and sell primary and value-added products to residents and institutions. The five strategies under this goal address facilities for processing and distribution, institutional food procurement policies, direct marketing, a collaborative approach to marketing as well as a review of government policies and programs.

Local Government Role

Actions to support the financial viability of the agri-food sector often fall beyond the sphere of local government, yet there is a role to enable the expansion of the local food businesses. This is achieved by considering ways to increase private investment and procurement by public institutions, while also ensuring that existing policies, programs and regulations help foster local food activities. Metro Vancouver also has less of a direct role in Goal 2, but can promote the agri-food sector's contribution to regional economy.

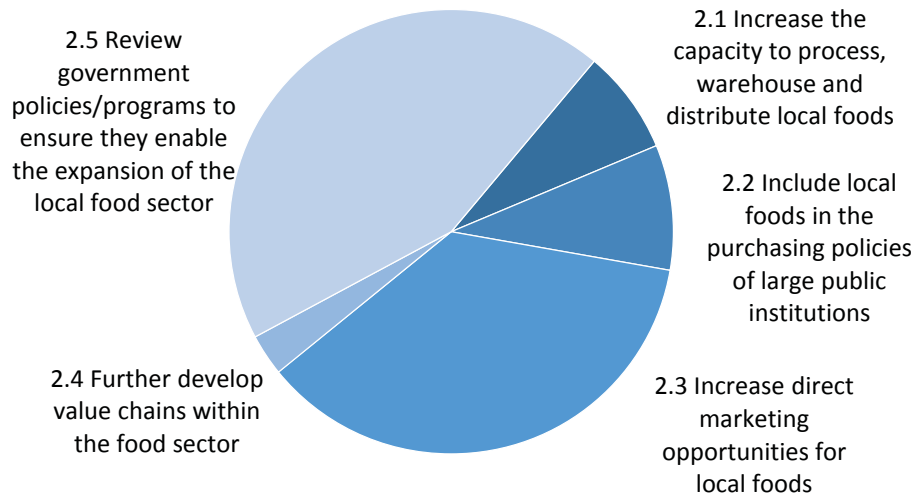
Since the adoption of the RFSS, local governments have undertaken actions such as:

- reviewing their procurement policies and investigating ways to include local food in purchasing agreements where appropriate;
- expanding efforts to support direct marketing of local foods by enabling farmers markets through leases on city owned lands, providing access to utilities and municipal services, and improving signage and promotion of farm tours and events; and
- developing plans to address food related issues and reviewing regulations, bylaws and policies to remove obstacles and to create a more enabling business environment for local food enterprises.

Planned Actions

Local governments have identified 33 actions that will be undertaken over the next five years to advance implementation of Goal 2. The greatest activity planned is to increase direct marketing opportunities and to review and align government policies and programs. Few actions are planned for increasing capacity to process and distribute local food and leveraging purchasing policies of public institutions. Creating value chains of collaborative networks among industry stakeholders is not addressed as it is largely outside the scope of local government jurisdiction. The distribution of these planned actions by RFSS strategy is illustrated in the following chart.

Goal 2 - Planned Actions (2015-2020)



2.1 Increase the capacity to process, warehouse and distribute local foods

Only a few municipalities have identified actions to address the lack of facilities for processing and distributing locally produced food.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Conduct or fund a food hub feasibility study		Langley Township, Richmond, Vancouver
Examine the feasibility of creating farming co-ops and Surrey-based wholesaling		Surrey
Identify opportunities for multi-purpose structures and other infrastructure to be used for farmers markets and other community events		Vancouver

2.2 Include local foods in the purchasing policies of large public institutions

A number of municipalities have adopted a 'buy local' policy to facilitate increased purchasing of local foods by public institutions. However, their experience to date suggests there may be challenges to overcome, including defining 'local food', and an increase in scope to address health, sustainability and other considerations as part of the process.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Review purchasing agreements and integrate local food options where appropriate	Burnaby, Pitt Meadows	

Explore opportunities for mobile food business, schools & City facilities to increase local food purchases	Vancouver	
Measure the percentage of local food procured by the City and make recommendations for an appropriate target		Vancouver

2.3 Increase direct marketing opportunities for local foods

Most municipalities are supporting direct marketing of local foods through farmers' markets, farm tours, tourism, and other education activities within their communities.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Investigate and clarify regulations for retail sale of agricultural products directly from farms and investigate the feasibility of small scale pocket markets		Burnaby
Ensure local zoning / regulations align with liquor sale permits at farmers markets		Burnaby, New Westminister, Port Coquitlam
Provide in-kind support or direct incentives for farmers' markets (e.g. space, infrastructure, advertng, discounted leases)	Burnaby, Coquitlam, Delta, Maple Ridge, New Westminister, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Richmond, Surrey, Vancouver, White Rock	
Develop and promote local farm tours and agri-tourism opportunities	Langley Township, Richmond	Burnaby, Surrey
Enable farm signage on municipal boulevards to help direct the public to local farm stands	Delta	
Explore local street vending opportunities through an existing pilot program, or by adopting pilot program policy.		New Westminister, Richmond
Support alternative food / retail distribution models including Community Supported Agriculture programs and fresh food deliveries to recreation and civic facilities	New Westminister, Surrey	Vancouver
Explore farm gate sales for urban farms		Vancouver
Support day trips to agri-food tourism destinations that encourage the purchase of local food products	White Rock	

2.4 Further develop value chains within the food sector

There is a limited role for local governments in developing connections between food businesses.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
<i>No actions related to local government</i>		

2.5 Review government policies and programs to ensure they enable the expansion of the local food sector

There's a clear trend of municipalities across the region making a concerted effort to review and align policies to be deliberately supportive of businesses producing and distributing local food. Equally important, many municipalities are also developing new environmental, economic and community plans and strategies that incorporate agriculture and food issues, an approach commonly referred to as adding a "food lens".

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Bylaws and regulatory updates:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review zoning bylaws to expand support for local food 		Anmore, New Westminister, Surrey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore regulatory revisions to allow urban agriculture / 'market food gardening' in residential areas 		Burnaby, New Westminister
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update regulations to support local craft brewing and distilling 		Coquitlam, New Westminister, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend / promote bylaw changes that support bee keeping in some residential and other zones. 		Burnaby, Maple Ridge, North Vancouver District
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare draft Development Permit Application Sustainability Checklist that includes a food sustainability category 		New Westminister, North Vancouver City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current policies for protecting agricultural lands 		North Vancouver District
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend the Procedure Bylaw to permit staff authority to issue Flood Hazard Lands Development Permits in ALR 		Surrey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host staff education activities to ensure consistent implementation of agricultural legislation 	Surrey	
Develop or incorporate food policy into plans		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore developing a community based food strategy 		Burnaby, New Westminister
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop or revise Sustainability Strategy to include a food systems theme 		Burnaby

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an Economic Sustainability Strategy that will include promoting Delta's rural character and farmland 		Delta
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set short term goals for local food activity in the Urban Agriculture & Food Security Action Plan and revise policies/regulations as needed 		North Vancouver City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funds to support development of a business case for integrating local food into municipal plans and policies and develop a food policy 		North Vancouver District
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt / implement a Food Charter and fund organizations to assist staff to integrate a food lens into municipal polices and processes 	North Vancouver City	New Westminster, North Vancouver District
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include policies for new development that encourages on-site green space, community gardens and urban agriculture in the draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan 		Port Moody
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the Sustainability Charter to guide development and corporate decisions related to agricultural production and access to food 		Surrey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare the West Clayton and Grandview Neighbourhood Concept Plans to support the protection of agricultural land 		Surrey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Official Community Plan to include or revise food security and related policies 		New Westminster, West Vancouver
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply a 'food systems lens' to planning processes by creating a food system checklist to assist in reviewing development applications, rezoning and/or community plans and a toolkit to help development applicants incorporate food system elements in new developments 		Vancouver

New Initiatives for Local Governments

Local government responses to Goal 2 partly reflect a minor role in directly supporting value-added processing of primary agricultural products, with the exception of some engagement with provincial regulatory requirements. Other gaps in implementing this goal include:

- avenues to increase capacity for local food processing/ storage both within the Agricultural Land Reserve and in Urban Centres;
- the lack of success in developing robust local food purchasing policies indicates that more effort is required to share information and lessons learned from current practices and investigations;
- support the local food economy by putting more emphasis on agriculture and food in economic development strategies and by explicitly considering impacts on the regional food system when embarking on other local government planning processes (referred to as a *food lens*); and

- ability to take a proactive role in supporting local food availability by advocating to the private sector about the importance of agriculture viability through local food consumption when dealing with businesses on other issues.

The recommended actions to collaboratively address gaps identified by local governments are:

New Actions	Agency	Timeline
1. Develop policies to expand processing, storage and distribution of local food (e.g. revitalization tax exemptions).	All local governments	1-3 years
2. Share information on the potential opportunities to increase local food purchasing strategies at municipal forums to support farms in the region	Vancouver and UBC to lead the first event	1-3 years
3. Profile and incorporate agri-food business ventures into regional and municipal economic development plans	Metro Vancouver and Agricultural municipalities	3-5 years
4. Work with bulk food purchasers to increase local food purchasing to expand amount and diversity of local food available to consumers.	Metro Vancouver to facilitate with participation from all local governments	1-3 years

DRAFT

Goal 3 *People Make Healthy and Sustainable Food Choices*

The aim of Goal 3 is to help citizens build knowledge and skills around local food, healthy eating and the connection to sustainability. Four strategies from the RFSS address healthy food choices, promoting local food, education and celebrating our international cuisines. A key dimension lies in increasing awareness of the opportunities to promote the local food.

Local Government Role

Local government has a role in raising awareness about local, healthy food and why it is important to communities. This role is often delivered through public education and partnerships with civil society groups. Municipalities are connecting residents to fresh, locally grown products through, outreach, tourism, and other community events. They also facilitate skills development opportunities for residents and for vulnerable groups through social service providers. Metro Vancouver has developed avenues to engage students and youth through curriculum development, fostering experiential learning, and teacher training.

Since the adoption of the RFSS, local governments have undertaken actions such as:

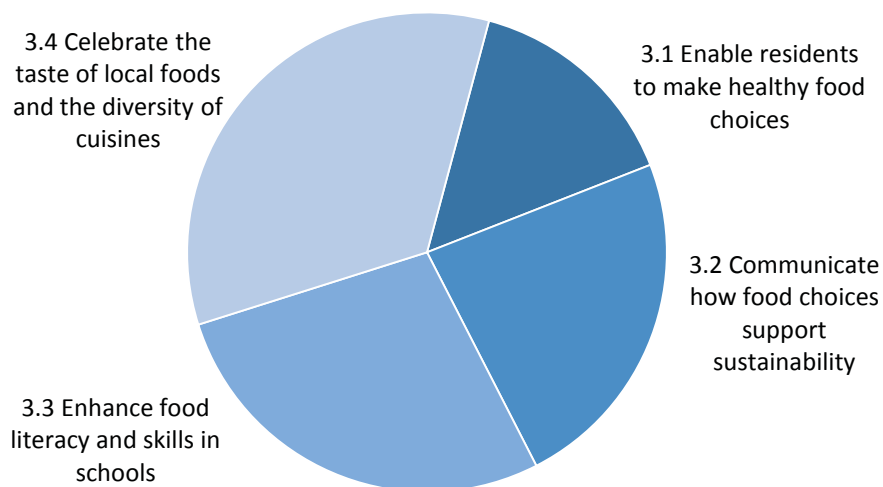
- ongoing outreach and educational activities within their communities including hosting annual events;
- initiating a program to increase student capacity to manage and expand teaching gardens, and supporting agricultural-related content and programming at the local museum; and
- developing new curriculum resources to support k-12 teachers and students on integrating 'food systems' thinking into the classroom.

Of all five RFSS goals, Goal 3 seems to be the one with the least amount of local government activity associated with it. This reflects the supportive role local governments often play in funding non-governmental organizations, community groups, and educational institutions to increase knowledge, build capacity and make the community connections.

Planned Actions

Local governments have identified 40 actions that will be undertaken over the next five years to advance implementation of Goal 3. The majority of these planned actions are ongoing activities. The strategy receiving the most attention for local governments is the celebration of local food, followed by planned actions related to education. The distribution among the four RFSS strategies is illustrated in the chart below.

Goal 3 - Planned Actions (2015-2020)



3.1 *Enable residents to make healthy food choices*

Some local governments are educating the public about healthy eating, but for the most part, other social service providers have taken on this role.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Support the Golden Ears Feast that provides cooking education programs for parents of low income families and host an Educational Speakers Series	Maple Ridge	
Continue involvement in Table Matters that provides education, public engagement and community development	North Vancouver City, North Vancouver District	
Support the Tasty Connections Program and cooking classes that helps individuals prepare a diversity of healthy nutritious meals at the Kent Street Centre	White Rock	
Develop partnerships with community groups to deliver outreach and workshops on healthy eating and growing food.	Burnaby, New Westminister, North Vancouver District, Port Moody, Richmond, Surrey, Vancouver	
Provide workshops teaching people to grow their own food, reduce their waste and support their local wild edible ecology.	North Vancouver District	
Develop an implementation strategy that supports the Blue Dot movement, which includes the right to eat healthy food.		New Westminister

3.2 Communicate how food choices support sustainability

Providing information about locally produced food is the most common practice to increase awareness about food choices and sustainability.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	1-3 years
Implement a social media campaign that explains the connection between sustainability and nourishment, as part of Environmental Sustainability Strategy		Burnaby
Help fund signage on farmland that identifies the crops being produced in the fields	Delta	
Promote local agriculture on the municipal website with information on local food event and markets	Delta, Richmond, Vancouver	
Promote the 'True North Fraser' local food brand and agricultural experience	Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows	
Promote local farm tourism through Circle Farms Tours, a self-guided tour of local farms and food producers	Pitt Meadows	
Prepare Surrey version of the Farm Fresh guide that highlights organic, u-pick and crop information on Surrey farms and support the Food for Thought Program that showcases farm and food producer information	Surrey	
Increase access to food resources and information through materials in multiple languages	Vancouver	

3.3 Enhance food literacy and skills in schools

There is a strong response to student and youth education from local governments.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
In kind-support to promote the Youth Connection School Learning Gardens Project to increase capacity of students to manage and expand school learning gardens at all 8 secondary schools	Burnaby	
Host the Barn Kids Program that includes children in gardening and cooking food produced at Hawthorne Grove/Harris Barn	Delta	
Support the Neighbourhood Champions program "More peas please" that teaches children how to grow food	Maple Ridge	
Develop the Green Ambassadors program for high school students to apply what they learn at City events	Richmond	

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Host the Stewart Farm Day Camp where children can experience what it's like to be a farmer, "Farmhand Fever"	Surrey	
Encourage integration of community food markets into Vancouver School Board programming as part of healthy food options for youth and families	Vancouver	Metro Vancouver
Update and develop new curriculum resources to support K-12 teachers, and students to be "Food Systems Thinkers and Leaders and incorporate Food Systems Thinking (literacy) into ongoing Metro Vancouver School & Youth Leadership Programs	Metro Vancouver	
Collaborate with K-12 schools and partners to increase food literacy of students and/or parents	Metro Vancouver, New Westminster	
Contribute a Metro Vancouver component to the BC Agriculture in the Classroom Summer Institute for Teachers		Metro Vancouver

3.4 Celebrate the taste of local foods and the diversity of cuisines

Most municipalities are continuing to host food and agriculture related festivals and events and there are also planned actions to award funding to civil society groups to support awareness and community events.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Host or partner on food related events and educational activities that celebrates food:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Festivals (including funding) • Aldergrove Festival Days • Country Celebration in Campbell Valley Regional Park • Fort Langley Cranberry Festival • Country Fest and 4H clubs • Golden Harvest event • Front Yard Food Garden Contest • Heritage Apple Festival at Derby Reach Regional Park • Garlic Festival • Feast of the Fraser • StrEAT Festival • Queensborough Urban Fall Fair • Family Fusion Dinner • Fingerling Festival • Chefs to Field 	Burnaby	
	Langley Township	
	Langley Township	
	Langley Township	
	Maple Ridge	
	Maple Ridge	
	Maple Ridge	
	Metro Vancouver	
	Richmond	
	New Westminister	
	New Westminister	
	New Westminister	
	New Westminister	
	Port Moody	
	Richmond	

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cloverdale Rodeo • Flavours of Surrey • Party for the Planet on Earth Day • Olde Harvest Festival at Stewart Farm • Surrey Salmon Run • Harvest Fall Festival • Taste White Rock 	Surrey	
	Surrey	
	Surrey	
	Surrey	
	Surrey	
	Surrey	
	White Rock	
Award agricultural awareness grants to non-profit organizations across the region.	Metro Vancouver	

New Initiatives for Local Governments

Local government responses to Goal 3 reveal the following gaps in actions to support the RFSS that can be addressed by local governments through collaboration:

- communicating the connection between food choices and sustainability; and
- coordinating consistent messaging and activities about the importance of local food to sustainability.

The recommended actions to collaboratively address gaps identified by local governments are:

New Actions	Agency	Timeline
1. Develop a communication strategy with common messaging for local governments to educate residents about the connection between farmland, food insecurity, climate change and sustainability.	Metro Vancouver to facilitate with participation from all local governments	1-3 years
2. Recommend to Health Authorities the types of initiatives desired by municipalities to expand food- related programs in urban communities.	All local governments	1-3 years
3. Work with Health Authorities and appropriate agencies to ensure appropriate food safety training for commercial and community food production in urban communities.	All local governments	1-3 years
4. Distribute multi-lingual information on local food to new immigrants through community organizations using resources developed by Surrey and Vancouver	Surrey and Vancouver to share resources with other local governments	1-3 years

Goal 4 *Everyone Has Access to Healthy, Culturally Diverse & Affordable Food*

The aim of Goal 4 is to address food insecurity, ensuring both physical and economic access to healthy food for all residents. This goal also encompasses some of the broader dimensions of an equitable food system including the indirect social benefits (e.g. health, place-making, education, community-building) that accompany the more direct economic and nutrition dividends of urban agriculture. The three strategies from the RFSS target vulnerable groups, urban agriculture and the necessity to recover nutritious food.

Local Government Role

Local governments are taking a strong leadership role in ensuring equitable access to healthy food by delivering programs, financing assets and supporting outreach to vulnerable or low income groups. Much has been achieved by working closely with community organizations, funding initiatives and by helping these groups navigate regulatory processes. Of all the RFSS goals, Goal 4 has the strongest response in terms of the range and number of local government actions.

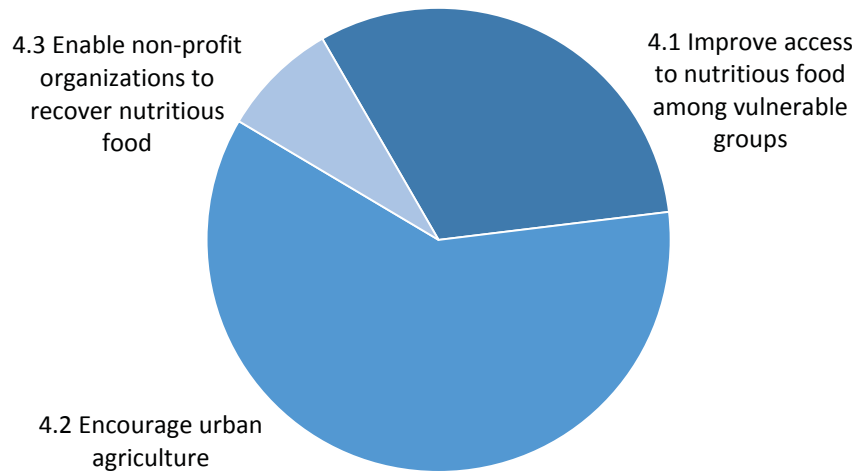
Examples of actions completed since the adoption of the RFSS include the following:

- initiating pilot projects to allow residential bee keeping (apiculture) and urban chickens in selected areas and under specific circumstances;
- completing research on how to improve food security in social housing sites; supporting programs to facilitate food access for vulnerable groups; and
- creating community gardens for residents, with plans for continuing to add new gardens.

Planned Actions

Local governments have identified 25 actions that will be undertaken over the next five years to advance implementation of Goal 4. Although the majority of these planned actions focus on urban agriculture, more than a third of activities under Goal 4 target food insecurity in the region. The chart below illustrates the types of actions committed to by municipalities across the region.

Goal 4 - Planned Actions (2015-2020)



4.1 *Improve access to nutritious food among vulnerable groups*

Many municipalities have programs or partnerships with community associations to provide food access to vulnerable groups.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Support hosting of the bi-annual Empty Bowls Fundraising Gala to raise money for food programs	Burnaby	
Support education, skill building and cooking activities for vulnerable and low income residents	Burnaby, Langley Township, New Westminister, Richmond	Surrey
Offer discounted nutritious meals for seniors, immigrant or refugee families	Burnaby, Langley City, Langley Township, New Westminister, Richmond, Surrey, White Rock	
Provide grants to social service groups to ensure vulnerable residents have healthy meals	Burnaby, Langley Township, Maple Ridge, New Westminister, North Vancouver District, Port Coquitlam, Richmond, Surrey	
Investigate options for increasing access to healthy food through mobile produce stands or food hubs with the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society		Burnaby, New Westminister

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Support trips to local farms for refugee families to enable direct access to fresh, local food and compile information on low cost sources of food	Surrey	
Improve access to information on participating in community gardens for under-represented ethno-cultural groups	Vancouver	
Analyze current opportunities and challenges facing community kitchens and compile an inventory of under-utilized kitchens		Vancouver
Increase the number of community food markets in Vancouver from 4 to 15 by 2020		Vancouver
Offer grocery shopping support programs for seniors and persons with disabilities	Burnaby, New Westminster	

4.2 Encourage urban agriculture

One noticeable trend is that urban agriculture is being pursued across the region, by both Agricultural and other municipalities. While a substantial amount of municipal effort goes toward improving the availability of community gardens for residents, or adding new gardens, there is a wide array of other activities being planned to encourage urban agriculture and connect residents with the social benefits of local food.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Encourage, via in-kind support, backyard sharing programs that match homeowners with residents looking for gardening space	Burnaby	New Westminister
Continue outreach and launch pilot projects to test the feasibility of permitting new types of urban agriculture (e.g. bee keeping, backyard chickens, container gardening, fruit bearing trees on public land)	Port Moody, Vancouver	Pitt Meadows, Surrey
Review development applications for opportunities to incorporate urban agriculture activities	Burnaby, New Westminister, North Vancouver City, North Vancouver District, Port Moody	Vancouver
Host annual programs celebrating gardening and urban agriculture	Delta, Maple Ridge	
Establish a new Langley Urban Agriculture Demonstration Project		Langley City
Support the Maple Ridge Garden Club	Maple Ridge	
Update Community Poverty Reduction Strategy to include policies related to poverty reduction and food security.		New Westminister

<p>Community gardens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and improve the approval process for community gardens • Fund, support or maintain residents’ access to community gardens • Establish new community gardens, and in some circumstances with an intent to improve access for vulnerable groups (e.g. wheelchair accessible) 	<p>Burnaby, Coquitlam, Delta, Langley City, Langley Township, Maple Ridge, Metro Vancouver, New Westminister, North Vancouver City, North Vancouver District, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Richmond, Tsawwassen First Nation, Vancouver, White Rock</p>	<p>Burnaby, New Westminister, Surrey</p> <p>Pitt Meadows, Surrey</p> <p>New Westminister, North Vancouver District, Richmond, Surrey, Vancouver, West Vancouver</p>
--	--	---

4.3 Enable non-profit organizations to recover nutritious food

Food recovery efforts are being led by urban municipalities and Metro Vancouver, although much of the future work requires better coordination among all levels of government, health agencies and civil society groups.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	1-3 years
Continue to support the “Food Runners” pilot project at two selected sites, and investigate opportunities for pilot project expansion	Burnaby	
Fund the “Scaling Up Food Rescue Project” that encourages partnerships between potential donors and recipients (social agencies)		North Vancouver City, North Vancouver District
Explore pilot food recovery programs and initiatives to channel surplus edible food to people.		Vancouver
Participate in development & promotion of food recovery guidelines with the Centre of Disease Control		Metro Vancouver
Advocate for tax incentives to support food recovery		Metro Vancouver
Educate the public on how to reduce unnecessary discards of edible food		Metro Vancouver

New Initiatives for Local Governments

While there is some activity underway across the region, specific aspects of food insecurity require further attention from local governments. Gaps in implementing this goal include:

- a lack of coordination among all levels of government, the private sector and civil society groups to respond to poverty and increasing numbers of residents that are reliant on food banks and social services for nutritious food; and
- actions in response to opportunities for the recovery of nutritious and edible food.

The recommended actions to collaboratively address gaps identified by local governments are:

New Actions	Agency	Timeline
1. Promote the Food Donation Guidelines (developed by BC Centre for Disease Control and other partners) to food distribution and food service sectors through municipal and regional business correspondence and events.	All local governments	1-3 years
2. Draw from Surrey's experience to create and share information on culturally relevant local food availability for refugee and new immigrants	All local governments	1-3 years
3. Learn from Vancouver's study on community kitchens to identify opportunities and challenges for expanding food preparation and processing in under-utilized kitchens	All local governments to undertake analysis; Metro Vancouver to provide regional database	1-3 years

Goal 5 *A Food System Consistent with Ecological Health*

Goal 5 focuses on actions that contribute to sustaining our natural systems and resources and encouraging better land stewardship. The four strategies from the RFSS address ecosystem goods and services, food and packaging waste, best management practices and adaptation to climate change. A systems approach ensures environmental impacts are minimized across all functions of the regional food system: from production, to distribution, consumption and waste.

Local Government Role

Local governments are responding to this goal through programs and projects aimed at protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat, pollination, and soil quality, while concurrently reducing impacts from waste, pesticides, water and air contaminants. Unlike other goals, most actions are being undertaken directly by local government with less involvement of community organizations and other groups. Municipalities are vigilant in protecting ecological assets and the Agricultural municipalities shown leadership by promoting best management practices on agricultural land. Metro Vancouver has a leadership role in addressing food waste across the region.

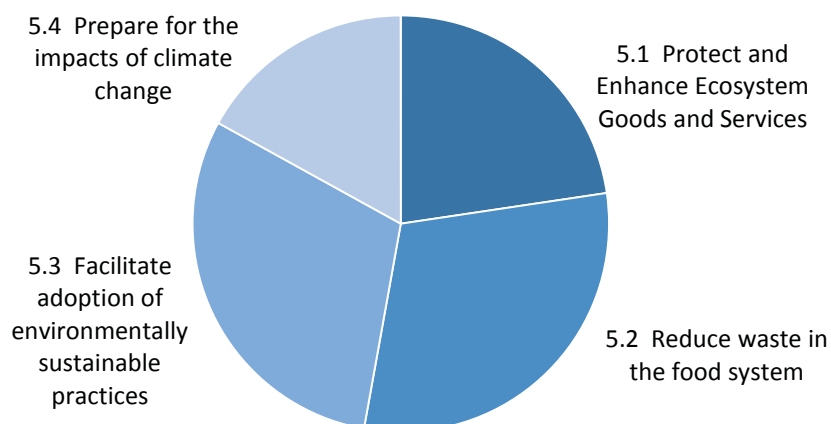
Since the adoption of the RFSS, local governments have undertaken actions such as:

- supporting pollinator species by encouraging habitat enhancement projects;
- conducting Integrated Stormwater Management Plans to manage water flowing from urban areas and the impact on aquatic and terrestrial species, vegetation manage, and groundwater recharge;
- educating residents and businesses about the disposal ban on food wastes through media campaigns and advising on ways reduce organics and food waste as part of the regional Organic Waste Ban;
- launching initiatives in support of Best Management Practices for stream crossings, and land management for horse and small-lot owners; and
- developing climate change adaptation strategies that considers impacts on local food production.

Planned Actions

Local governments have identified 32 actions that will be undertaken over the next five years to advance implementation of Goal 5. Approximately a third of these planned actions are focused on food waste and another third on minimizing environmental impacts of development and business activities. These planned actions were categorized based on the RFSS strategies and the distribution is illustrated in the chart below.

Goal 5 - Planned Actions (2015-2020)



5.1 Protect and Enhance Ecosystem Goods and Services

Local governments are continuing to maintain and enhance wildlife habitat, flood protection, pollination and other services provided by nature.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Continue significant dyke upgrades by maintaining flood protection through pump stations, flood boxes, river and shoreline dykes	Burnaby, New Westminster	
Investigate avenues for connecting existing high value habitat areas with habitat corridors		Burnaby, New Westminster
Support the Day at the Farm event hosted by the Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust, an organization that promotes the protection of migratory bird habitat through soil conservation and farm practices	Delta	
Implement a pilot Ecological Services Initiative for three years		Langley Township
Create and enhance pollinator habitat through research, new policies and on-the ground projects		Metro Vancouver, North Vancouver District, Richmond, Surrey
Implement the Winter Crop Cover Program as part of the snow geese management program	Richmond	
Engage agriculture representatives in the Biodiversity Farm Trust regarding dykes and waterways		Surrey
Adopt an Urban Forest Management Strategy with a focus on food systems		New Westminster

5.2 Reduce waste in the food system

As waste management is part of Metro Vancouver's mandate, the regional district has a leading role in directing research, education and awareness on food waste as well as developing initiatives to support municipal efforts in reducing organic waste and food packaging in their communities.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Complete a technical review of options for businesses and multi-family residential buildings to manage organic wastes on-site (storage, dewatering, composting, anaerobic digestion) and share results.		Metro Vancouver
Develop a position statement on residential & commercial garburators including commercial digesters and macerators		Metro Vancouver
Develop a new bylaw for fermentation operations (grains/fruits, breweries, wineries and distilleries) discharging to the sewer system		Metro Vancouver
Promote the use of LeanPath, to enable restaurants to measure, and then reduce food waste by improving food purchasing, storage and preparation methods		Metro Vancouver
Develop outreach programs for residential and commercial operations to keep grease out of the sewer		Metro Vancouver
Participate in the National Zero Waste Council's food working group in revising food labelling (best before/use buy/sell by dates)		Metro Vancouver
Initiate the "Love Food Hate Waste" to help residents reduce food waste through menu planning, buying local and seasonal foods		Metro Vancouver
Provide equipment and/or programming support for residents and schools to support organics collection and composting	New Westminster, North Vancouver District	
Support community composting education programs	New Westminster	

5.3 Facilitate adoption of environmentally sustainable practices

Local governments are integrating best management practices into their plans/policies and are educating the public on ways to reduce water consumption, air and other contaminants in the environment.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Minimize environmental impacts from pesticides through Integrated Pest Management educational programs	Burnaby, Richmond	Surrey, Metro Vancouver
Provide workshops for residents on natural pest control and composting	Delta, Richmond	

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Develop a Stream Crossing Guide and promote a Land Management Guide for agricultural landowners demonstrating best management practices		Langley Township
Promote Environmental Farm Plan Workshops organized by community associations to increase awareness of the Environmental Farm Plan program	Langley Township	
Identify opportunities through community energy planning to address transportation emissions from imported food		North Vancouver District
Explore parks programming around native plant foraging for edible and medicinal plants		North Vancouver District
Identify opportunities for recycling greywater and reducing water use for parks, gardens and farms	North Vancouver District	Pitt Meadows
Promote the Council resolution to ban genetically modified crops	Richmond	
Promote the Seed Sale and Exchange to increase plantings of heritage vegetable, flower and herb seeds, fruit trees and nursery plants	Surrey	
Create healthy soil guidelines for urban farms		Vancouver
Determine whether to exempt pest management and weed control from the proposed outdoor burning regulation		Metro Vancouver
Conduct outreach to the agricultural sector regarding visual air quality issues through the BC Visibility Coordinating Committee		Metro Vancouver
Conduct outreach to food processors on reducing energy use through the Small and Medium Size Enterprise Greenhouse Gas Emissions Program		Metro Vancouver

5.4 Prepare for the impacts of climate change

Agriculture is on the forefront of experiencing impacts from climate change and therefore are taking direct action to understand and mitigate the risks to the region's food producing lands.

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Develop climate change adaptation strategies for the agricultural community, share results of an agro-economic flood study, support a flood preparedness toolkit and research into drainage and salinity implications for soil-based farms		Delta
Complete an agricultural communication strategy that will raise awareness of the changing climate and local food production		Delta
Include urban agriculture considerations as part of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy		New Westminister, North Vancouver District

Planned Actions	Agency Timeline	
	Ongoing	Next 5 Years
Refurbish old pump stations to increase capacity, improve the electrical system, and adding new pump stations		Pitt Meadows
Plan to accommodate up to 1metre of sea level rise by 2100	Richmond	
Work on dyke upgrades, pump upgrades and ditch conveyancing as part of the Nicomekl and Serpentine Rivers Dyke Strategy	Surrey	

New Initiatives for Local Governments

Local government responses to Goal 5 reveal that in many instances, the region is just starting to recognize the ecological assets available from agricultural land, in addition to the ecological benefits derived from the natural environment. Gaps identified in responding to Goal 5 include:

- recognition of the range of benefits provided by ecological goods and services (such as water, purification, climate regulation and nutrient cycling);
- awareness and actions to prepare for the impacts of climate change on local food production and ecosystem services in urban environments.

The recommended actions to collaboratively address the gaps identified by local government are:

New Actions	Agency	Timeline
1. Prepare a climate adaptation strategy for agriculture and coordinate implementation of the priority actions with senior governments	Metro Vancouver and Agricultural municipalities	3-5 years
2. Expand pollinator habitat through new policies and field projects based on results from Metro Vancouver, North Vancouver District and Richmond	All local governments	1-3 years

Emerging issues in the regional food system

The actions identified by local governments in the preceding sections demonstrate how each of the RFSS goals are being addressed and where further action is warranted by local governments. Through the development of the Action Plan, three new strategies emerged that were not addressed in the RFSS, but will become more pertinent to local governments in the future.

1. Food access and safety in emergency planning

Local government is responding to legislative requirements to engage in emergency management planning. These efforts help address and mitigate some of the risks associated with natural disasters or the impacts of climate change. In many cases emergency plans lack process and protocols to address food related issues such as availability of food in an emergency and food safety risks. This disconnect is more pronounced in Non-Agricultural municipalities, although Agricultural municipalities also have an opportunity to broaden the focus of emergency planning to more broadly consider food insecurity implications (e.g. access to food, transportation and supply chain disruptions, etc.) in emergency plans and procedures.

New Action	Agency	Timeline
1. Identify how food security and emergency food issues are being addressed in each local government’s emergency management plans and processes	All local governments	1-3 years

2. Recognizing the linkages among poverty, health and food

The RFSS addresses some aspects of food insecurity by focusing on improving food access among vulnerable groups, and by facilitating community groups to recover nutritious food. This approach provides an initial direction for local government action, however, it does not sufficiently advance the region towards actions to address the root of food insecurity, poverty and the impacts on physical and mental health. There is a need to strengthen the capacity to engage with the interconnection of social planning and food system planning throughout the region

New Action	Agency	Timeline
2. Recommend policies and programs to address health outcomes of poverty and food insecurity to senior governments	All local governments	1-3 years

3. Strengthen local government collaboration to address agri-food issues

One of the greatest barriers to tackling the challenges in the regional food system is the lack of coordination among local government on agri-food issues. While there is some effective collaboration with non-profit organizations and health agencies, more effort to create linkages among municipalities and with the regional district can help advance actions in a more effective and efficient way.

New Action	Agency	Timeline
------------	--------	----------

<p>3. Assign a staff member to be the local government contact person for agriculture and food related actions and to participate in meetings on the Regional Food System Action Plan twice a year. Working groups may be struck to advance collaborative actions.</p>	<p>All local governments</p>	<p>1-3 years</p>
--	------------------------------	------------------

DRAFT

Monitoring Progress

The Regional Food System Action Plan is a snapshot of planned and proposed local government actions toward advancing Regional Food System Strategy implementation over the next 3-5 years. It is presented as a living resource to be updated on an ongoing basis, as local government actions are executed on the ground.

The indicators below are proposed to measure the Action Plan’s progress. These indicators were selected based on their relevance to tracking progress in addressing the gaps in RFSS implementation identified in this plan and the potential availability of data from existing local government sources. Metro Vancouver staff will establish a process with designated local government staff across the region to share information and data to update the indicators on an annual basis.

Goal 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of dollars invested region-wide on irrigation and drainage infrastructure that will be necessary for the agricultural industry to adapt to a changing climate • The number of new farmers that have received access to public land for commercial food production
Goal 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of new facilities established to process, warehouse or distribute food for a group of local farmers • The number of new institutional purchasing policies that focus on local food
Goal 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of local food communication initiatives that are being promoted by two or more local governments
Goal 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of edible food recovered and distributed to low income for vulnerable populations
Goal 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of actions identified and implemented by local government to support food producers adaptation to climate change
Emerging Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of emergency plans that address food access or food safety issues in the region • The number of advocacy actions completed to address the linkage between poverty, health and food

OCT 23 - New Initiatives for Local Governments (excerpt from the draft Action Plan)

New Actions	Agency	Timeline
Goal 1 1. Collectively advocate to senior governments for funding programs to expand investments in irrigation and drainage infrastructure necessary to adapt to climate change.	Metro Vancouver and Agricultural municipalities	1-3 years
2. Investigate feasibility of regional land trust to enable new farmers to access agricultural land.	Metro Vancouver and Agricultural municipalities	1-3 years
3. Expand municipal involvement in programs that enable new farmers to start a business such as Surrey's Virtual Incubator Farm Project Online system.	All local governments	1-3 years
Goal 2 1. Develop policies to expand processing, storage and distribution of local food (e.g. revitalization tax exemptions).	All local governments	1-3 years
2. Share information on the potential opportunities to increase local food purchasing strategies at municipal forums to support farms in the region.	Vancouver and UBC to lead the first event	1-3 years
3. Profile and incorporate agri-food business ventures into regional and municipal economic development plans.	Metro Vancouver and Agricultural municipalities	3-5 years
4. Work with bulk food purchasers to increase local food purchasing to expand amount and diversity of local food available to consumers.	Metro Vancouver to facilitate with participation from all local governments	1-3 years
Goal 3 1. Develop a communication strategy with common messaging for local governments to educate residents about the connection between farmland, food insecurity, climate change and sustainability.	Metro Vancouver to facilitate with participation from all local governments	1-3 years
2. Recommend to Health Authorities the types of initiatives desired by municipalities to expand food-related programs in urban communities.	All local governments	1-3 years
3. Work with Health Authorities and appropriate agencies to ensure appropriate food safety training for commercial and community food production in urban communities.	All local governments	1-4
4. Distribute multi-lingual information on local food to new immigrants through community organizations using resources developed by Surrey and Vancouver	Surrey and Vancouver to share resources with other local governments and Metro Vancouver	1-3 years

<p>Goal 4</p> <p>1. Promote the Food Donation Guidelines (developed by BC Centre for Disease Control and other partners) to food distribution and food service sectors through municipal and regional business correspondence and events.</p>	All local governments	1-3 years
--	-----------------------	-----------

New Actions	Agency	Timeline
2. Draw from Surrey’s experience to create and share information on culturally relevant local food availability for refugee and new immigrants	All local governments	1-3 years
3. Learn from Vancouver’s study on community kitchens to identify opportunities and challenges for expanding food preparation and processing in under-utilized kitchens	All local governments to undertake analysis; Metro Vancouver to provide regional database	1-3 years
<p>Goal 5</p> <p>1. Prepare a climate adaptation strategy for agriculture and coordinate implementation of the priority actions will senior governments</p>	Metro Vancouver and Agricultural municipalities	3-5 years
2. Expand pollinator habitat through new policies and field projects based on results from Metro Vancouver, North Vancouver District and Richmond	All local governments	1-3 years
<p>Emerging Issues</p> <p>1. Identify how food security and emergency food issues are being addressed in each local government’s emergency management plans and processes.</p>	All local governments	1-3 years
2. Recommend policies and programs to address health outcomes of poverty and food insecurity to senior governments	All local governments	1-3 years
3. Assign a staff member to be the local government contact person for agriculture and food related actions and to participate in meetings on the Regional Food System Action Plan twice a year. Working groups may be struck to advance collaborative actions.	All local governments	1-3 years

12216055