

Halifax Food Charter

CURRENT SITUATION

The strength of our local food system is directly linked to quality of life, the vibrancy of our communities, and the sustainability of our urban and rural landscapes. Across Halifax there is growing awareness and concern about our food system and our collective ability to ensure that all people, at all times, have an adequate supply of nutritious and sustainably produced food. These concerns are reflected in high rates of chronic disease and food insecurity, environmental degradation, and challenges that are faced by many local farmers and fishers to earn a living. Despite this, we are also a region with immense natural resources, a rich cultural fabric, and a long history of fishing, farming and community self-reliance. Creating a food system that will serve everyone – one in which all residents can access foods that enhance health, ensures individual dignity, and enables our agricultural and fishing communities to thrive – will require leadership and coordination across sectors. Our health and the health of future generations depends on it.

The Halifax Food Charter presents a vision for a food system that will strengthen the health of our people, our communities, and the natural world. It is a declaration, and a call to action, for a coordinated effort to revitalize and strengthen a locally-based, sustainable food system for Halifax.

VISION

A just and sustainable food system in Halifax is rooted in healthy and resilient communities where no one is hungry, and everyone can access nutritious and culturally preferred food. It is an economically viable, diverse, and ecologically sustainable system for growing, processing, distributing, accessing and preparing food.

PRINCIPLES

To create a just and sustainable food system, we commit to:

Community Economic Development

Actively supporting locally based food systems which are pillars of sustainable and resilient economies be they urban, suburban, rural, or coastal. Promoting entrepreneurship in food and ensuring farmers, fishers, harvesters, distributors, and processors are able to generate adequate incomes and create employment opportunities.

Social Justice

Upholding food as a basic human right and ensuring that food is obtained in a manner that maintains dignity, reflects cultural diversity, and challenges inequities. A just food system ensures that residents have opportunities to produce their own food as well as the economic resources to participate fully in the food system.

Ecological Health

Adopting a whole-systems approach to food that protects and enhances our natural resources, reduces and re-integrates food waste, and builds resilient ecosystems. This approach will preserve the natural integrity of farmlands, watersheds, and the species diversity of animals, plants, and seed stocks.

Individual and Community Health

We recognize that nutritious and safe food is a fundamental component of health and well-being at every age. We value supportive environments that promote adequate access, education, and community agency in all aspects of the food system from production to consumption.

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Celebration

Encouraging the sharing and celebratory nature of food, which is a fundamental human experience. Food brings people together, in a celebration of community, culture, and diversity.

We therefore declare our commitment and intent to work in partnership with individuals, organizations, businesses, institutions, and governments, towards achieving a just and sustainable food system across Halifax. We recognize that this commitment has real implications for our policies, programs and practices, and we commit to the realization of the vision and principles set out in this document, through our support of the development of a coordinated food strategy.

Signature: _____

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