

HRM 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 Regional Municipality (HRM), the unceded traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq, there is growing awareness of, 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, lack of food sovereignty for Indigenous Peoples, environmental degradation and challenges preventing many local farmers and fishers from earning 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 – where all residents can access foods that enhance health, where individual dignity and community self-reliance are assured, and where our agricultural and fishing communities thrive – will require leadership and coordination across sectors, organizations and governments. Our health and the health of future generations depends on it.

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

VISION

A just and sustainable food system in HRM 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, catching, harvesting, 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 experienced by systemically disadvantaged communities, including those who work in food production regardless of the nature of their residency in Canada. A just food system ensures that residents have opportunities to produce their own food and the 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 supports the natural integrity of farmlands, fisheries and watersheds and the species diversity of animals, fish, plants and seed stocks.

HRM Food Charter

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.

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, communities, organizations, businesses, institutions and governments towards achieving a just and sustainable food system across HRM. We recognize that this commitment has real implications for our policies, programs and practices and we commit to realizing the vision and principles set out in this document by supporting the development of a coordinated food strategy.

Signature: _____

DRAFT