New Westminster

Food Security and Systems Plan

2025 – 2030



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Land Acknowledgment



Quayside Highrises Downtown Waterfront

We recognize and respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. We acknowledge that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. As a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

Contributions

The development of this Food Security and Systems Plan would not have been possible without the contributions of the Food Security Working Group, whose members shared their expertise, passion and time.

It would also not have been possible without the many people who participated in the focus groups, interviews and the Food Forum. The information shared, along with the empowering stories and thoughtful ideas, were invaluable. Special thanks to staff at the Fraser Health Authority and the New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society, who were actively engaged in the development of this Plan.

Additionally, we acknowledge the financial support of the PlanH Program and the Province of British Columbia. PlanH supports governments to advance policies, programs and strategies aimed at improving health, equity and well-being for all.

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Executive Summary

Similar to other municipalities, **New Westminster is facing increasing food insecurity**. This increase is a result of global and regional factors, such as climate change, food inflation and high housing costs, and local factors, such as the closure of the city's largest food distribution program.

Food insecurity exists when residents are unable to acquire enough food that meets their dietary and cultural needs in a socially acceptable way.

While rising food costs affect everyone, they have the greatest impact on people with fixed or low incomes, as well as those with mobility challenges and underlying health conditions. At the same time, community-based food providers are struggling to meet the increasing demand for their services, while dealing with limited and uncertain funding, unstable lease arrangements, and volunteer burnout. As a result, several programs are facing closure, which places the whole system at risk of failure.

Council, recognizing the seriousness of the situation, directed staff to work with the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society to enhance support for community-based food providers and to develop a new Food Security and Systems Plan. This direction is intended to stabilize the situation in the short-term, and through the development of the plan, create a more resilient and sustainable system in the longer-term.

This plan, which is based on extensive case study research and consultation, includes 43 actions, which are organized according to six categories. Given the complexity of this issue, a key component is the need for enhanced collaboration, both among food providers and among all levels of government. Another key component is a need for adequate and sustainable funding to ensure that food providers can meet increasing demand; address the diverse needs of clients, including related to medically-appropriate and culturally-preferable foods; and provide a dignified, empowering and respectful environment in which to access food and work towards greater food security.

As with any plan, implementation is key. To this end, a Food Table is recommended to drive implementation. This body will have a diverse membership, including representation from the City, other levels of government, food providers, non-profit organizations, and people with lived and living experience. It will build momentum through several short-term, visible actions, and will continue to foster understanding of this issue and solicit support for the Plan. It will also advocate to the senior levels of government for systemic changes to create a more resilient and sustainable food system, while working to reduce food insecurity through enhanced income and support.

1.0 Introduction



Garden Plots at Ross Tower (BC Housing Site)

1.1 Background

The need for a new Food Security and Systems Plan is in response to the growing number of residents in New Westminster who are experiencing difficulty accessing affordable, culturally-preferable and nutritious food. Although this is not a new challenge, it has been aggravated by climate change, food inflation, high housing costs, increasing inequalities, and the departure of a major food distribution program.

In February 2024, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society discontinued its weekly food distribution program at Olivet Baptist Church in New Westminster. City staff and Food Bank officials worked together for months to explore a number of alternative sites; however, no identified site met the Food Bank's needs or requirements.

NEW WEST RESIDENTS UTILIZING THE BURNABY FOOD BANK

70-75%



50%

70-75% of clients used alternate sites in 2024; by early 2025, that dropped to about 50%.

With the closure of this program, clients were redirected to the Food Bank's warehouse on Winston Street in Burnaby. This site is several SkyTrain stations from New Westminster, and encompasses a bus connection and a walk, which presents a significant barrier to families with young children and people with disabilities and mobility limitations, especially when transporting groceries on the return trip.
In June 2024, the Food Bank reported that 70% to 75% of its clients from New Westminster were using alternate Food Bank sites, including the cited warehouse; however, in February 2025, the Food Bank reported that this figure was likely closer to 50%.

The Food Bank is assisting community-based food providers, referred to as agency partners, as a way of maintaining service continuity and supporting local access to essential food resources. This assistance was based on the Food Bank's assumption that only about a quarter of its clients from New Westminster were now relying on community-based food providers when the figure is closer to half.

In February 2025, City staff conducted a survey of Food Bank agency partners and found that these community-based partner programs were struggling, with several facing closure and putting the whole system at risk of failure. Agency partners identified the following challenges: use of their limited funds to address increasing demand; uncertain lease arrangements; volunteer burnout; and inability to meet cultural, dietary and nutritional needs.

> In June 2024, and in response to the closure of the above cited program, Council directed staff to work with the Food Bank to address unmet food needs and to enhance support to community-based food providers in New Westminster. Council also directed staff to work with community-based food providers to better understand their needs, and to explore opportunities for collaboration, including by engaging them in the development of a new Food Security and Systems Plan. In support of its development, the City successfully applied for a $15,000 grant from BC Healthy Communities PlanH Fund.

The Plan not only addresses the current crisis related to food insecurity in New Westminster but proposes a number of actions to enhance collaboration and to create a more resilient and sustainable food system for the future – one that is not so reliant on donations, free lease of space, one-time grants, and volunteers. It also recognizes the key role to be played by the senior levels of government.

> “ In my not-so-wild imagination, food is at the heart of community in New Westminster. People gather for neighbourhood meals where anyone might join around the table for food and company - in parks, or halls, or at block parties. There are ethnically diverse restaurants and stores where people can taste home while others can go on culinary journeys. There are community gardens where people grow food together, trying new seeds to see what we can grow in this climate. There are grocery-store like emergency food sites for when people need them - and people can take what they want and need because the food is reclaimed or donated from all kinds of businesses with different foods to share. It’s understood that food grown on boulevards and at the sidewalk edges of people’s front gardens is meant to be shared with neighbours. And people gather to put up food for winter - teaching and sharing the work of making jams, pickles and sauces.
>
> **FOOD PROGRAM MANAGER’S VISION FOR A FOOD SECURE NEW WESTMINSTER**

1.2 Food Insecurity and Health Implications

Increasing numbers of families and individuals across Canada, British Columbia, and locally are **struggling to access the food they need.** Household food insecurity is primarily income-based and can often have negative impacts on people’s physical and social well-being. The below statistics highlight these links.

CANADIANS FACING FOOD INSECURITY

25.5%

Of Canadians—about 10 million people—experienced food insecurity in 2024

Canada

According to Canadian Income Survey data from 2024, 25.5% of Canadians experienced food insecurity. This amounts to about 10 million people, including about 2.5 million children. Accordingly, food bank visits have risen dramatically. In March 2024, there were over 2.0 million visits to food banks in Canada – which represented a 90% increase compared to March 2019. Among these clients, 33% were children and 8% were seniors. Notably, 18% of food bank clients across Canada were currently employed, which is the highest proportion ever recorded.

British Columbia

According to Canadian Income Survey data from 2024, 24.4% of British Columbians experienced food insecurity. Similar to Canada, food bank visits have risen dramatically. In March 2024, there were 225,605 visits to food banks in British Columbia – which represented an 81% increase compared to March 2019. Among these clients, 31% were children and 11% were seniors. According to the 2024 BC Poverty Reduction Strategy, challenges related to poverty and food insecurity were more acute for people who experience discrimination, including Indigenous peoples, newcomers, and those living with disabilities.

INCREASE IN FOOD BANKS VISITS

+81%

Increase in BC food bank visits since 2019

SCHOOL DISTRICT LUNCH PROGRAM — FUEL UP!

Local school meal program data reflects just how many families are struggling to meet basic food needs.

546 meals per day

As of January 2025, **the elementary and middle school meal program was averaging 546 meals per day**, of which 418, or 76.4%, were subsidized for children in need. These numbers stayed relatively stable for the remainder of the school year.

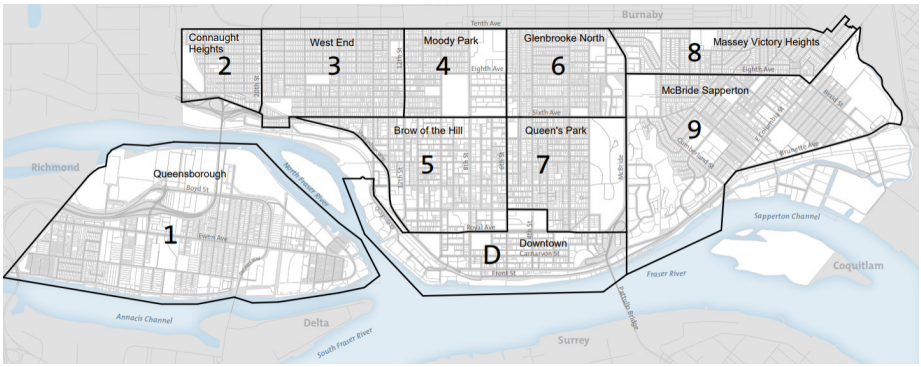
Of note, when the program began in 2020 these numbers were reversed, **and only 30%** of children were receiving subsidies.

New Westminster

According to the most recent Taxfiler data (2023), the poverty rate in New Westminster was 15.6% (12,770 people living in poverty), which was slightly lower than for British Columbia (16.7%). This represented a large increase from 2020, when there were many COVID-19 pandemic related income supports in place and the poverty rate in New Westminster was 11.9% (8,930 people living in poverty). This increase in poverty since 2020 demonstrates the important role played by transfers from the senior levels of government in reducing poverty, and by association food insecurity, and the increased hardship that occurs when such supports are eliminated.

Poverty rates varied by neighbourhood (based on Census tract data) in New Westminster in 2023. The highest rate was 19.4% in Connaught Heights, while the lowest rate was 8.8% in the Port Royal district of Queensborough.

In 2023, 14% of children (0 to 17) or 1,710 children and 16% of seniors (65+) or 2,190 seniors were living in poverty. Many of these seniors relied on fixed incomes that do not cover the rising cost of food, health care and housing.



New Westminster's Residential Neighbourhoods

The rising levels of poverty in New Westminster is reflected in the number of people accessing food hampers and free food programs. Between December 2024 and June 2025, the number of people accessing food hampers increased from 1,350 to 1,422, or 5.3%, and the number of people accessing meal programs increased from 2,615 to 2,703, or by 3.4%. These numbers will likely increase further with the recent closures of the Lower Mainland Purpose Society's weekly food distribution program on Fridays, and the Union Gospel Mission's daily breakfast program, with the latter feeding approximately 400 people every week.

The City's Greenhouse, located in Queen's Park, grows fresh produce each season to share with community-based food programs, including Don't Go Hungry and the St. Barnabas-Shiloh Fifth Avenue Church. In 2025, 2,655 kilograms of beans, beets, cabbage, eggplant, peppers, tomatoes and zucchini were distributed.

"The food we are surviving on is **killing us**."

The Link to Health

A report released by the BC Centre for Disease Control in 2023 titled, Priority Health Equity Indicators for British Columbia: Household Food Insecurity, presents research linking poorer health outcomes to food insecurity. **The key findings from the report included:**

Household food insecurity **in children and youth:**	Household food insecurity **in adults and seniors:**
· Evidence for the likelihood of increased birth defects, anemia, asthma, lower nutrient intake, and poorer general health and hospitalization among children who are food insecure versus those who are food secure · Children under the age of five years living in food insecure households are more likely to experience developmental delays, poorer cognitive outcomes in math and vocabulary, and challenging behaviour.	· Food insecurity is inversely associated with adult dietary quality, particularly for intakes of dairy products, fruits and vegetables. · There is evidence linking food insecurity to decreased levels of diabetes control and management. · Food insecurity is linked to poorer cognitive function in middle age and in older adults. · There is evidence linking food insecurity to stress, anxiety, depression and sleep disorders

> My colleague saw two senior women (possibly in their 70s and 80s) rummaging through a garbage bin at Sixth and Sixth. My colleague approached them and they were initially reluctant to engage in a conversation but did share some information.
>
> They said they come out late at night to find food in the garbage bins so that they will not be seen by someone who knows them. Their pensions are not enough to cover their rent and other expenses.
>
> One of the seniors told my colleague that she often thinks of taking her own life due to the hardship. Needless to say, my colleague had a sleepless night after hearing this information.
>
> **SERVICE PROVIDER**

1.3 Policy Context



Food Security Action Plan 2017

In 2018, the City was one of the first municipalities in Metro Vancouver to adopt a food security or system plan, and, as a result, it was considered a municipal leader in this area. The plan, known as the Food Security Action Plan, was a proactive response to increasing food insecurity in the city.

The Plan was developed in collaboration with over 30 faith-based and non-profit organizations, and outlined 38 actions across six key focus areas. It fostered stronger collaboration among food providers and enabled both the City and its partners to access funding and grants to expand local food resources.

The Plan achieved many successes, including the meaningful engagement of people with lived and living experience through the Community Voices Working Group, which was essential to its implementation. It also supported the City's COVID-19 food access efforts by helping secure senior government funding. With this support, faith-based and non-profit organizations were able to address food insecurity and launch new programs such as Don't Go Hungry, which is still active today.



Food Justice Project 2022

In 2022, the City, with funding from the Community Food Action Initiative and in partnership with the Fraser Health Authority and the New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society, launched the Food Justice Project. Its aim was to elevate the voices of equity-seeking groups and include equity in a new Food Security and Systems Plan. A working group was formed and a public survey was developed and shared on the City's Be Heard platform.

The goal of this survey was to identify barriers to accessing food and potential strategies to addressing them through the application of a food justice framework. By the time the survey was closed, 112 responses were received from a diverse range of residents.

> "Years ago, as a newcomer to Canada, I was educated but unable to work. I couldn't afford groceries. I have firsthand knowledge of being hungry, fearing if I would have a meal the next day, saving one meal for as long as I could because I didn't know if I would have another. Everyone is impacted by food insecurity but the marginalized, and underprivileged, are by far the most impacted.
>
> **SURVEY RESPONDENT**

Volunteering at Don’t Go Hungry

TESTIMONIAL

I came to New Westminster with my three children in June 2022 from Colombia, arriving as a refugee. We chose this city for its size and sense of community, hoping to build a better future. As a journalist and photographer, it was important for me to stay connected to my work and find purpose.

Volunteering with Don’t Go Hungry (DGH) has been a vital part of helping my family feel at home. I still remember our first Saturday in line for a food hamper. A kind volunteer greeted us with a few words in Spanish and introduced us to other volunteers who spoke our language. That small gesture helped us feel like we belonged.

Through volunteering, my children and I have made friendships, learned about Canadian culture, and experienced the joy of giving back. We’ve discovered how meaningful it is to serve others and build community together. For over two years now, we’ve been proud to be part of the DGH family.

This experience has given me the chance to share my skills and passions. I’ve helped restart the St. Aidan’s garden, bringing in other volunteers who wanted to contribute. I’ve also used my photography to capture the story of DGH; its people, its events, and its heart.

> ***DGH has opened doors for us in a new country. It has taught my children the value of compassion and community. In a time of challenge and change, this program gave us not just support, but a place to grow and contribute.***

"**We have lost our connection to food.** We are used to growing and seeing food produced / processed in traditional ways."

Other Relevant Plans and Policies

Official Community Plan (Updated 2023)

The Official Community Plan provides a vision, goals and policies for the city until the year 2041. Together, these elements connect the community's aspirations with tools needed to achieve them. It includes the following two policies:

POLICY 1.1
Support an equitable city where all residents can meet their basic needs.

POLICY 1.6
Promote opportunities to grow food and participate in food culture.

The Plan has been recently updated to align with Provincial legislative changes, particularly related to housing. Goals, policies and actions related to food security and systems will be added over the next five years.

Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan (In Progress)

The City is developing a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan (CCARP) that will help the City and community prepare for and recover from climate change related impacts, such as drought, extreme heat, and extreme storms and precipitation events, which can affect food security. Through the Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan, the City will outline a vision for New Westminster's future that is:

RESILIENT — Ensuring our community, infrastructure, and environment are ready for climate change and able to handle and recover from extreme weather events and natural disasters like floods, heavy rainfall, and extreme heat.

EQUITABLE — All community members - especially those most affected by climate change - have access to the supports and resources they need to stay safe and recover from climate events.

ADAPTABLE — Actions identified are flexible and can change as needed, and designed to work even if the future turns out differently than expected.

The CCARP will identify solutions that help strengthen local capacity to support food system resilience under changing climate conditions.

People, Parks and Play: Connections for All (In Progress)

The City is updating its Parks and Recreation Plan. The renewed Plan, named People, Parks, and Play: Connections for all, will highlight the role that parks and recreation play in building connected, healthy, resilient communities. The following principles will guide the updated Plan to meet a wide range of community needs: Diversity, equity inclusion, and anti-racism; Truth towards reconciliation; Community belonging, connection, and wellbeing; Climate resilience; Local economy; and Service adequacy and standards.

2.0 Developing the Plan



City Hall Community Garden

2.1 Introduction

The process to develop the Food Security and Systems Plan involved completing case study research; conducting an environmental scan of food assets and gaps; and establishing a working group to assist with plan development.

2.2 Case Study Research

As part of the research stage, food plans and strategies developed by other municipalities were reviewed, including the City of Burnaby's Food System Strategy (2024), the Tri-Cities Region Food Security Action Plan (2021), and the Vancouver Park Board Local Food System Action Plan (2021)

2.3 Environmental Scan

An environmental scan of food assets was conducted to provide an overview of the food system in New Westminster. This resource will continue to be updated and serve as a valuable tool for enhancing awareness of local food resources; fostering collaboration and partnership; and identifying needs and gaps.

Vision

Our vision is to build a **sustainable and resilient food system** where all members of the community **have access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally-preferable foods in a dignified way.**

Through partnerships, advocacy, collaboration, and a **commitment to equity**, we strive for a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, eat well, and celebrate food together in community

"Income disparity seems to be a primary barrier to food equity. **How can nutritious food be more readily available to those who are living in poverty?**"

2.4 Food Security and Systems Plan Working Group

The working group guided the development of this Plan. It included the following members:

City of New Westminster;

Fraser Health Authority: Population and Public Health Team;

New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society;

business representatives;

faith-based and non-profit organizations;

people with lived and living experience.

The working group focused on developing a vision, principles and themes and informed the engagement activities, including the focus groups, the interviews and the Food Forum.

Principles



EQUITABLE
Treat food as a basic human right for all people.

ACCESSIBLE
Ensure that all people have access to affordable, nutritious and culturally-preferable foods.

FINANCIALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE
Advocate for stable funding and support the development of local food producers and the growing of food.

HEALTHY, NUTRITIOUS AND CULTURALLY-PREFERABLE
Enhance the health of all people in our community by helping them obtain the foods they need and prefer.

COMMUNITY-FOCUSED (JOYFUL + CELEBRATORY)
Come together to support and feed the community with dignity and respect and to celebrate the city's diverse food cultures.

2.5 Community Engagement

The engagement activities for this Plan focused on amplifying the voices of those in the community that are most impacted by food insecurity, both directly and indirectly. Engagement included focus groups, interviews, and a Food Forum, as well as a survey with Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society agency partners.

Focus Groups February—April 2025	**Interviews** February—April 2025	**Food Forum** April 2, 2025
8 focus groups held—total of 123 people with lived and living experience	9 interviews held	35 people in attendance
PARTICIPANTS: City Squad Youth Group (New Westminster Youth Services) Immigrant Services Society of BC Legion Manor Lower Mainland Purpose Society — Peer Network Maida Duncan Women's and Family Drop-In and Resource Centre Móytel Lalém New West Family Place	**PARTICIPANTS:** Dan's Legacy Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Association Farmers Market Coupon Program News Westminster Environmental Partners New Neighbourhood House and Holy Trinity Cathedral New Westminster School District Ryall Park Community Garden Coordinator The Salvation Army	**PARTICIPANTS:** Business Community City of New Westminster Environmental Groups Faith Based and Non-Profit Organizations Fraser Health Authority Member of Parliament New Westminster Community Garden Society New Westminster Farmers Market New Westminster Schools People with Lived and Living Experiences (Community Action Network, Community Voices, Food Justice Working Group)



Food Security and Systems Plan Project Team

Surveys with Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society's Agency Partners

In February 2025, City staff distributed a survey to Food Bank agency partners in order to better understand the impacts on them with the closure of the weekly food distribution program at Olivet Baptist Church in New Westminster. Based on the results, it was found that the volume of clients has significantly increased, with some agency partners instituting waitlists to better manage demand. It was also found that agency partners often had to buy extra food to supplement what they received from the Food Bank. Some relied on donations and grants to provide nutritious, culturally preferable foods, as well as to cover the costs of needed equipment and supplies. Overall, the survey found that agency partners were struggling, with some at the breaking point.

2.6 Emergent Themes

Through the community engagement activities, a set of emergent and interwoven themes surfaced—each reflecting the collective aspirations and urgent priorities of the community and service providers. These themes included:



Collaboration

Strengthening collaboration and joint advocacy among food providers, all levels of government (municipal, regional, provincial, and federal), Indigenous organizations, community groups, and businesses, is central to this theme. Key actions include applying a food lens to planning; advancing programs like food hubs and literacy; improving food recovery and distribution; expanding access to food spaces; and gathering data to guide responsive, community-focused efforts.



Food Access and Affordability

Ensuring equitable food security means providing access to affordable, healthy, nutritious food that aligns with cultural preferences. This theme centres on choice - people deserve the right to choose the food they need with dignity.



Sustainability (Financial, Environmental and Climatic Dimensions)

Building a resilient food system by securing stable and sustainable funding for community food providers; advancing climate resiliency through support for Indigenous food and medicine cultivation; and promoting urban agriculture and food recovery initiatives are key to this theme.



Food Economy

This theme highlights the role that all levels of government can play is building resilient, community-based food systems. Key actions include facilitating food growing spaces and urban agriculture, supporting local food businesses and encouraging local purchasing, and celebrating diverse food cultures.



Health, Food and Culture

Celebrating food as a source of health identity and social connection is central to this theme. The actions focus on fostering inclusive spaces, promoting access to culturally meaningful and nutritious foods, sharing traditions, and empowering vulnerable groups through community-based initiatives and tailored food literacy.



Systems Change (Reimagining the System)

The root cause of food insecurity is poverty. This theme centres on advocacy efforts that target senior levels of government, around issues such as access to a fair and living wage and benefits (disability and employment), and sustainable community supports. By rethinking policies and funding, it aims to create a more equitable and resilient food system.

Voice of a Person with Lived Experience

TESTIMONIAL

"Keeping Our Culture on the Plate — Without Breaking the Bank"

Food is more than fuel — it's memory, culture, and connection. For many African newcomers in New Westminster, food is also a daily negotiation between tradition, health, and tight budgets.

We all need to eat. For some, food is a joyful priority; for others, it's whatever they can find, when they can afford it. Settling in a new country means adapting to Canada's nutrition guidelines while holding onto the tastes that remind us of home.

As we grow older, we learn that not all fuel is equal — what we eat today shapes our health tomorrow. I've learned, sometimes the hard way, to choose wisely: cutting back on sugar and salt, reading labels, and balancing diet with exercise to keep my waistline — and medical bills — under control.

In our community conversations, I've noticed how far people go to stay connected to familiar flavors. Some travel to Surrey for Kenyan-grown produce that local shops don't stock. Others, from Rwanda or Burundi, make do with what's nearby, saving special ingredients for big celebrations.

There's no right or wrong answer — it's about what we can afford, what nourishes us, and what reminds us who we are

> ***As a community, let's keep talking about how we eat — and how to make healthy, meaningful food choices, even when money is tight.***



"Don't just feed people, **we need action**."

2.7 Implementation Tools Available to the City for New Westminster

All levels of government—federal, provincial, regional and municipal—play a part in ensuring access to affordable, nutritious and culturally-preferable foods, and in creating a resilient, stable and sustainable food system.

The City can play the following roles:

Advocacy

The City can advocate to the senior levels of government for policies, resources and funding that:

- Enhance income supports, pensions and benefits that provide for more discretionary income, including for food.
- Invest in affordable housing and rent subsidy programs.
- Invest in food security programming, including funding for community-based food providers.

Partnerships

The City can collaborate with organizations involved in food security programming to:

Provide statistical information, including related to needs and gaps, which can assist faith-based and non-profit organizations to better target their interventions and apply for senior government funding and support.

Explore opportunities for shared planning and policy development. This can include establishing a Food Table to address needs and gaps in the community.

Policy and Regulation

The City can shape local food systems through policies and bylaws that:

Support urban agriculture and food recovery initiatives.

Support cultural food assets by developing a Tenant Assistance Policy, and supporting local businesses (New Westminster Retail Strategy, Phase 2 Report 2023).

Improve the resiliency of the local food system, which could include encouraging the consumption of local and sustainable food and creating a corporate sustainable food procurement policy (included in the City's Environmental Strategy & Action Plan 2018 – Strategies 11.1 and 11.2).

"Can't afford to look at food labels, **just have to look what's in the budget**."

Programs

The City can play a role in encouraging, facilitating and supporting community programs and services by:

Providing low to no cost space to service providers to distribute food.

Supporting and enhancing food literacy workshops, such as those offered by the City Library.

3.0 Themes and Actions



Foods served at World Food Day



Dan's Diner

3.1 Collaboration

Actions		Lead	Months		
			0-12	13-36	37-60
1	Establish a Food Table to support cross-sectoral collaboration, community engagement, data collection and partnership development to address needs and gaps; update the food asset map; and assist in the implementation of the Food Security and Systems Plan.	Planning and Dev.	X		
2	Enhance collaboration among City departments to help ensure that a food lens is integrated into relevant plans, policies and practices to enhance community food security.	Planning and Dev.	X	X	X

3.1 COLLABORATION

	Actions	Lead	Months		
			0-12	13-36	37-60
3	Explore opportunities to provide free or low to no cost spaces within City-owned facilities, to facilitate the delivery of food literacy programs – such as, cooking a meal on a budget – to people who are food insecure.	Planning and Dev.	x		
4	Build and strengthen relationships with the Indigenous community to support the implementation of the Food Security and Systems Plan and to ensure that Indigenous voices, knowledge and practices are recognized and incorporated.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table	x	x	x
5	Work with food providers, the community and potential donors, funders and sponsors to develop a comprehensive food hub that provides opportunities for food recovery efforts, fosters the growth of food entrepreneurs, and provides accessible kitchen spaces for service providers to facilitate cooking programs and food literacy.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table		x	x
6	Foster relationships with institutions and organizations (e.g., Douglas College, the Justice Institute of BC, New Westminster Schools, etc.) that have the capacity to provide space and/or support to community-based food programs.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table		x	x

3.2 Food Access and Affordability

	Actions	Lead	Months		
			0-12	13-36	37-60
1	Continue to work with the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society to enhance support to agency partners to enable them to meet increasing demand associated with the closure of the Society's weekly food distribution program. This support could include more and diverse food items, including medically-appropriate and culturally-preferable; refrigeration units to enhance storage ability and capacity; and technology to facilitate access and efficiencies, including related to measuring and reporting demand.	Planning and Dev.	x		

3.2 FOOD ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY

	Actions	Lead	Months		
			0-12	13-36	37-60
2	Ensure food-related information and resources distributed to the public, such as the Food Calendar and Survival Guide, are current, easily accessible (e.g., written in plain language) and, when possible, translated into multiple languages.	Planning and Dev.	X		
3	Explore partnerships with community groups, faith-based organizations, institutions and non-profit agencies to establish accessible community food cupboards or pantries, and to explore funding and sponsorship opportunities.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table		X	
4	Advocate to BC Housing as to the importance of providing culturally-preferable foods to meet the dietary needs of Indigenous peoples and other cultural and ethnic groups within its shelter and supportive housing developments.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table		X	
5	Identify the need for a discount or low-cost grocery store, including through the City's Economic Development and Retail Strategies.	Economic Dev.		X	
6	Explore funding, partnership and sponsorship opportunities to enhance access to Community Supported Agriculture Boxes, which includes fresh and imperfect foods.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table			X
7	Develop a map of cultural and ethnic food stores in New Westminster, and share demographic information which demonstrates the market opportunities related to cultural and ethnic food products	Planning and Dev. & Food Table	X	X	
8	Explore funding, grant and sponsorship opportunities to address mobility and transportation barriers to accessing food for seniors and people with disabilities and underlying health conditions, including carpooling, food delivery and ride share options.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table			X

3.3 Sustainability (Financial, Environmental and Climatic)

	Actions	Lead	Months		
			0-12	13-36	37-60
1	Advocate to the provincial government to establish a stable, sustainable, systems-level funding model to support community-based food security programs and infrastructure needs, thus moving away from one-time, short-term grant driven models.	Planning and Dev.	x	x	
2	Raise awareness of available grant opportunities and improve the ability of local food providers to respond effectively, including through the provision of statistics, support letters and training.	Planning and Dev.	x		
3	Work with Indigenous knowledge keepers to inform City horticulture plantings related to traditional foods and medicines.	Parks and Rec.	x	x	
4	Work with Indigenous knowledge keepers to inform City park plans, policies and practices to reflect Indigenous stewardship and traditional food systems, while creating community learning opportunities.	Parks and Rec.	x	x	x
5	Develop new community garden spaces and ensure that they are equitably distributed throughout the city, with provision for faith-based and non-profit organizations to provide access to their clients, including older adults and people with disabilities.	Parks and Rec.		x	x
6	Collaborate with the Climate Action Team to apply a climate lens to relevant food actions in the Food Security and Systems Plan and integrate measures into their plans and policies that support local food production, with consideration for future climate impacts and changes.	Climate Action	x		
7	Encourage existing and new grocery stores to partner with food recovery programs to divert surplus food from landfills, and acknowledge their participation through recognition programs	Planning and Dev. & Food Table		x	x
8	Advocate for provincial funding for the BC Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon Program, while collaborating with the program to expand its capacity to distribute coupons to low-income households through new and existing community partners.	Planning and Dev.		x	x

3.3 SUSTAINABILITY (FINANCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATIC)

	Actions	Lead	Months		
			0-12	13-36	37-60
9	Collaborate with local food providers to develop a shared emergency preparedness, response and recovery plan that addresses food access during crisis and supply chain disruptions, and embeds food access into municipal emergency planning frameworks	EMO		x	

3.4 Food Economy

	Actions	Lead	Months		
			0-12	13-36	37-60
1	Explore opportunities for the City to grow food (e.g., in greenhouses on City-owned land) for distribution to community-based food providers and social service organizations.	Parks and Rec.		x	
2	As part of the updates to the Official Community Plan and the Economic Development and Retail Strategies, recognize the importance of cultural food assets that support diverse community members.	Planning and Dev. Economic Dev.		x	
3	In consultation with community food growers, review and update City bylaws and regulations to facilitate the growing and distribution of food through backyard sharing programs, front yard and alleyway farm stands in residential areas, and rooftop and vertical farming.	Planning and Dev.		x	
4	Support actions included in the City's Retail Strategy that aim to assist small businesses and food entrepreneurs by streamlining the business-related permitting process; helping businesses navigate City regulations; and encouraging ghost kitchens (industrial kitchens designed to make food for pickup and delivery) as incubation opportunities through space provision.	Economic Dev.	x		
5	Work with organizations, such as Tourism New West, to promote activities, events and tours which highlight the rich diversity of foods, both prepared and retail, in New Westminster.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table		x	x

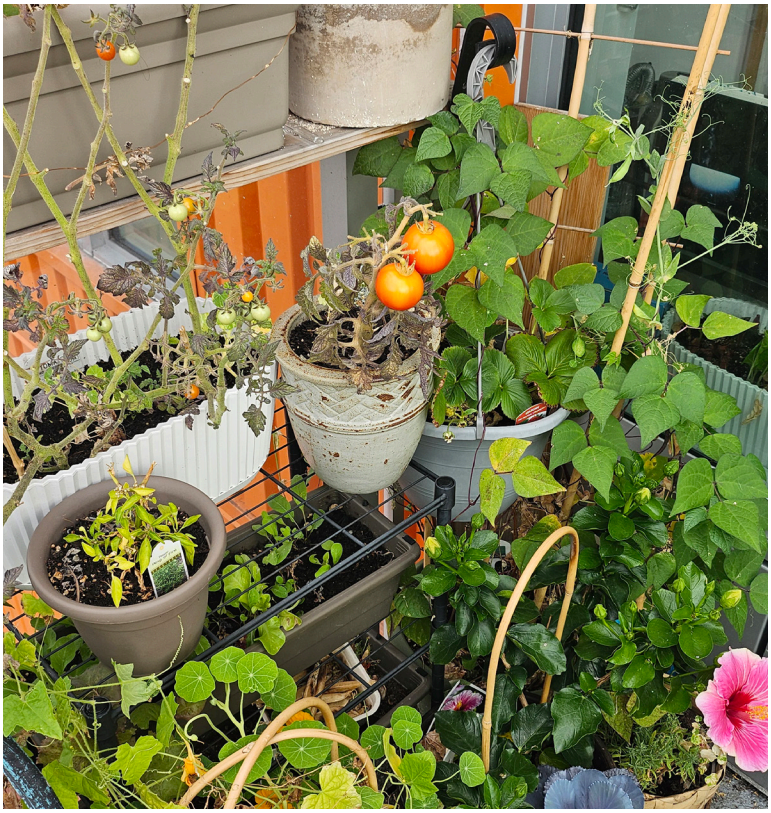
3.5 Health, Food and Culture

	Actions	Lead	Months		
			0-12	13-36	37-60
1	Continue to engage with people using food security programs to better understand their needs related to healthy, nutritious, medically-appropriate and culturally-preferable foods.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table	x		
2	Host an annual food event on World Food Day, and have October 16 of each year proclaimed as World Food Day by City Council.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table	x	x	x
3	Explore funding, grant and sponsorship opportunities to deliver food literacy programs targeting specific populations (e.g., seniors and single parent families)	Planning and Dev. & Food Table		x	x
4	Create and distribute a map of spaces that are accessible, affordable and available to facilitate bringing people together to celebrate food.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table		x	
5	Promote inclusive community events such as cultural cooking workshops, food fairs and shared meals that foster cross-cultural dialogue and social connectedness between diverse community members, including Indigenous peoples.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table		x	
6	Promote food festivals and special events in streets, parks and other public spaces as a way of celebrating cultural diversity through food.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table		x	
7	Promote the Neighbourhood Small Grant Program to cultural and ethnic communities as a way celebrating diversity through food and fostering connection and belonging.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table	x	x	x

3.6 Systems Change (Reimagining the System)

	Actions	Lead	Months		
			0-12	13-36	37-60
1	Update the City's Poverty Profile and Poverty Reduction Strategy given the strong link between poverty and food insecurity.	Planning and Dev.		x	
2	Continue to work with Metro Vancouver on the development and implementation of the Metro Vancouver Food System Strategy in order to ensure that New Westminster's interests are captured.	Planning and Dev.	x		
3	Advocate to the provincial government to develop and implement a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy that addresses the links between food insecurity and health. This plan should include increases to income and disability assistance rates; measures to close the gap between a minimum wage and a living wage; and active collaboration with the federal government to explore and implement a Universal Basic Income.	Planning and Dev.		x	x
4	Advocate to the senior levels of government for investments in affordable and non-market housing projects, as well as expanded rent subsidy programs, which reduce shelter costs and leave more disposable income to meet food security needs.	Planning and Dev.		x	x
5	Advocate to the senior levels of government for policies to cap food price hikes and to increase transparency, including by promoting fair pricing practices	Planning and Dev.	x	x	x
6	Advocate to the provincial government to encourage existing and new food retailers to adopt socially and environmentally responsible practices such as food recovery plans and waste reduction strategies	Planning and Dev. & Food Table	x	x	x
7	Advocate to the provincial government to remove access to barriers, including offering transit subsidies, to ensure that people can reach the food they need easily and affordably.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table			x
8	Support educational campaigns, such as "Love Food, Hate Waste" which urges Canadians to reduce household food waste - for example, by rethinking best before dates.	Planning and Dev. & Food Table			x

4.0 Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting





Patio Planters and New Westminster Farmer's Market

The Food Table will drive implementation of the Food Security and Systems Plan. This body will have a diverse membership, including representation from the City, other levels of government, food providers, faith based and non-profit organizations, and people with lived and living experience.

It will build momentum through several short-term, visible actions, and will continue to foster understanding of this issue and solicit support for the Plan. It will also advocate to senior levels of government for systemic changes to create a more resilient and sustainable food system, while working to reduce food insecurity through enhanced income and support.

The Food Table will develop three status reports with regard to the implementation of the action plan. The first will be at the conclusion of 12 months, which aligns with the implementation of the short-term actions (0 to 12 months); the second will be at the conclusion of 36 months, which aligns with the implementation of the medium-term actions (13 to 36 months); and third will be at the conclusion of 60 months, which aligns with the implementation of the long-term actions (37 to 60 months).

Each status report will include the following information for each action: whether it was fully, partially or not implemented. If partially or not implemented, then an explanation will be provided. For example, there may be inadequate staffing support or resources allocated to the Food Table, there may be no uptake by a senior level of government, etc. Based on the first and second status reports, the City staff representative could seek their Director's consent to bring a report to Council, which could request additional support in terms of staffing and resources. It is recommended that a new plan be developed after 60 months.



Volunteers at the St. Barnabas/Shiloh 5th Avenue Food Bank