

# PEEL FOOD CHARTER

This document represents the vision and values that guide our practices, policies, and priorities to create a food secure system, for now and the future.

It reflects a collective “we” and is a living document made in consultation with the community.

## VISION

We aspire to a just and sustainable food system that meets the needs and reflects the diversity of all Peel residents. It is a right for all people at all times to have physical and economic access to affordable, sufficient, safe and nutritious food to address their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy lifestyle.

*\*An infographic of the Food System will be placed here\**

## The Reality of Food Security

- Nearly 2 million people in Canada (7.7% of Canadian households) report being food insecure.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2014, the cost to feed a family of four was \$187.96 per week, an increase of 20% since 2009<sup>2</sup>
- In 2014, 841,191 Canadians turned to food banks each month. Children made up 51% of the visits to The Mississauga Food Bank’s member agencies.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2012, 18.5% of low-middle income earners could not afford to eat balanced meals in the past 12 months<sup>4</sup>
- In 2005, the cost of treating new cases of diabetes in Peel was \$271 million. A majority of these cases were caused by the fact that the patient is overweight or obese<sup>5</sup>
- 32% of Grade 7 to 12 students in Peel were either overweight or obese in 2011<sup>6</sup>
- Six million tonnes of food (valued at \$27 Billion) are wasted in Canada each year<sup>7</sup>
- More than 50% of currently imported food could be produced in Ontario<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Enough for All: Household Food Security in Canada 2013– Conference Board of Canada

<sup>2</sup> Region of Peel – Nutritious Food Basket 2009 and 2014 survey results. Cost calculated based on Reference Family of Four (A man and women aged 31-50 years; a 14-18 year old boy; and a 4-8 year old girl.)

<sup>3</sup> The Face of Hunger in Mississauga 2014 and Canadian Hunger Count 2014

<sup>4</sup> Canadian Community Health Survey, 2007/2008, 2009/2010, 2011/2012, Statistics Canada, Share File, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care

**VALUES** - To realize our vision individuals, groups, organisations and governments endorsing the Peel Food Charter recognize the importance and interdependency of the following values:

Because we value ***Equity & Social Justice***, we value a food system that respects the...

- Universal need for food, regardless of background, age, economic or social status, capability, life situation, or where a person lives in the region.
- Diversity of needs in taste, choice, cultural or dietary requirements and preferences.
- Ability to make personally acceptable food available and obtainable in sufficient amounts to anyone without undue hardship, especially by those currently experiencing this reality.

Because we value ***Education & Awareness***, we value a food system that supports...

- Communication, respect and sharing among food cultures.
- Opportunities to increase food skills across the food system.
- Accurate, diverse and simple information about food and nutrition.
- Awareness and encouragement for agriculture at all scales.

Because we value ***Community Engagement & Decision-Making***, we value...

- Strong links between urban, suburban and rural communities through food.
- Active participation from stakeholders in food policy decision-making.
- Celebration of diverse food traditions to support a culturally vibrant community.

Because we value ***Health & Well Being***, we value a food system where people are able to...

- Meet short and long term nutritional needs.
- Achieve the best possible health and reduce their risk of chronic disease.
- Live, work, and play in physical and social spaces designed to support health.
- Move beyond immediate nutritional needs towards achieving overall physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Because we value ***Sustainability***, we value a food system that promotes...

- Economic and environmental viability that supports the entire food community.
- Increased awareness of the various areas of the food system and how they are interconnected.
- Strong relationships and practices to ensure the resiliency of agriculture in Peel.
- Opportunities for innovation in meeting present and future needs.

<sup>5</sup> Peel Public Health - Staying Ahead of the Curve

<sup>6</sup> Peel Public Health - Growing Up in Peel

<sup>7</sup> Value Change Management, “Food Waste in Canada” (2010)

<sup>8</sup> Dollars & Sense: Opportunities to Strengthen Southern Ontario’s Food System

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

The Peel Food Charter recognizes the potential of all community members (individuals, businesses, organizations, and governments) to participate in achieving this shared vision. Through a collective commitment and shared responsibility the following are proposed:

## Equity & Social Justice

- Pay attention to what might be going on in the community. Raise your concerns.
- Work with and advocate for those who are affected most by unmet food needs.
- Examine and find ways to address issues such as living wage employments, adequate transportation, affordable housing, sufficient social supports etc.
- Reduce barriers to meet the food needs for consumers, residents, employees, producers, the communities etc.
- Improve, make use of, or contribute to dignified emergency food services in the meanwhile.

## Education & Awareness

- Increase opportunities for skill sharing and communication on:
  - How to cook and prepare nutritious foods
  - How to preserve foods (e.g. freezing, canning)
  - How to source appropriate, appealing and varied foods
- Develop programs and other opportunities for individuals and groups to come together to share food and learn from one another.
- Leverage opportunities to share resources between food system sectors to facilitate opportunities for learning and innovation.
- Generate reliable and accurate data on food security and measurement tools

## Community Engagement & Decision-Making

- Establish an on-going group with stakeholder membership dedicated to advocacy in support of the Peel Food Charter.
- Encourage institutional food purchasing policies to support local viable agricultural practices and promote strong links between urban, suburban and rural communities.
- Celebrate the connection between food and culture through public events and festivals and online through tourism resources and culture maps.

## Health & Well Being

- Promote and create policies and programs that advance:
  - The goals of food security (e.g. adequate wages, social supports)
  - Enhance physical and social spaces (e.g. community design, workplace policies, cafeteria designs, products in vending machines, team norms)
  - Enhance food skills (e.g. collective kitchen)

## Sustainability

- Champion initiatives that promote sustainability in all areas of the food system including food rescue/redistribution, harvest gleaning, and increased composting
- Increase awareness of local farmers markets and opportunities for consumers to support agriculture in Peel.
- Promote alternative solutions for individuals and groups to grow food for themselves and their families (e.g. community gardens, community food hubs).
- Encourage the implementation of policies that continue to protect and enhance food lands (agricultural/growing lands) across Peel Region.

## Reviewing the Draft Peel Food Charter

From July – September 2015, the Food Security Taskforce is inviting community feedback on the draft Peel Food Charter.

Here are a few ways to provide your feedback:

1. **Online Survey** – Answer a few short questions using the following link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X9CPKGV>
2. **Email** – additional comments can be sent to [poverty@peelregion.ca](mailto:poverty@peelregion.ca)
3. **In-person** – Join us for three community discussion sessions:  
Visit <http://peelfoodcharter.weebly.com/events.html> for current dates in Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga.
4. **Presentation** – Request a presentation from a member of our taskforce for your community or neighbourhood group.