

## ATTACHMENT 1

# Toronto Food Policy Council 2011-2012 Annual Report

The Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC) was created as a subcommittee of the Board of Health in 1991. The TFPC reports on its activities to the Board of Health annually. Four broad roles are outlined for the Council. The TFPC will:

1. Advise and support Toronto Public Health in the development of inclusive and comprehensive food security policies and programs expressing internationally-recognized principles of healthy public policy, social determinants of health, and the Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion;
2. Advocate for innovative community food security programs that address City-wide commitments of the Toronto Food Strategy, Toronto Food Charter and Toronto Environmental Plan;
3. Foster dialogue with Toronto Public Health, community groups, social agencies, educational institutions and businesses in the research, promotion, design, implementation and evaluation of emerging ideas in the field of community food security.
4. Act as the community reference group for the Toronto Food Strategy with a focus on identifying emerging issues, facilitating linkages between the community, Toronto Public Health and City Divisions, and advising the Food Strategy team on their implementation process.

TFPC members are appointed by Board of Health. Members include two City Councillors, one member from the Board of Health and up to 27 citizen members from diverse sectors of the food system. Toronto Public Health provides staff support to the Council. Staff supporting the TFPC report to the Manager of the Toronto Food Strategy to ensure effective coordination. The Council meets monthly to carry out activities to forward the TFPC's aims and objectives.

Food Policy Council activities bridge economic development, sustainability and public health issues. The Toronto Food Policy Council is recognized globally for its leadership on food policy development and for bringing a food systems approach to public policy issues. Across North America and Europe, food policy councils are proliferating, with over 100 documented in the U.S. alone. The food systems perspective espoused by food policy councils is seen as driving new approaches to health promotion, economic development and agriculture policy renewal. The TFPC's contribution to participatory approaches to food policy development is featured in several recent publications, including a *Canadian Institute for Health Research Citizen Engagement in Health Casebook*. TFPC members and staff are often contacted by municipalities and organizations in the process of launching a food policy council and play an important advisory role for new councils provincially, nationally and internationally.

The TFPC recognizes that broad food systems issues, including access to sufficient, safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food are important social determinants of health. The TFPC's cross-sectoral and diverse participation enhances Toronto Public Health's capacity to implement its Strategic Plan and the objectives of the Ontario Public Health Standards to reduce health inequalities. The TFPC provides advice and support for the implementation of the Toronto Food Strategy and serves as its community reference group.

The TFPC undertook a number of activities to fulfill its mandate in 2011-2012. The highlights of these activities are outlined below and a more thorough account of TFPC activities is provided in Attachment 4.

### **20 years of municipal food policy in Toronto**

2011 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the TFPC. In October 2011, a conference entitled "Together at the Table: The Foundations and Future of Food in Toronto" was held to celebrate 20 years of innovative food policy and action in Toronto. The keynote speakers were Carolyn Steel, author of "Hungry City: How Food Shapes our Lives," and the newly appointed Loblaw Chair in Sustainable Food Production, Dr. Ralph Martin. In addition past and present TFPC staff and members provided a historical overview of the TFPC's activities. Sessions covered a range of food systems issues, including participatory policy making, food system design, and the emerging food hub trend. Over 250 people participated in the conference.

The conference provided an opportunity to reflect on the successes and challenges faced by the TFPC over its 20 years of leadership on municipal food issues. The unique relationship between Toronto Public Health, the City of Toronto and Toronto's dynamic food community was highlighted. The Toronto Food Strategy was showcased as an important new development in promotion of sustainable, equitable food systems. The TFPC provides an institutional platform from which communities, business, academics, farmers, and City staff can launch discussions and initiatives that result in policy change.

### **Food policy in Toronto and the region**

Toronto City Council and committees consider a number of food policy issues each year. The TFPC advocates for food policies that enhance access to healthy food, strengthen the regional food economy, promote environmental sustainability, and that recognize the importance of a food systems approach to municipal policy development. Policy issues that the TFPC considered in 2011-2012 included the Local Food Procurement policy, the Backyard Hens policy, and the Canada/European Union Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement. The TFPC also engaged in the Official Plan review process. Finally, the TFPC is working to coordinate an urban agriculture action plan, in collaboration with city, community and institutional partners. This plan will identify specific policy recommendations for the City of Toronto, and will be launched at the upcoming international Urban Agriculture Summit in August 2012 hosted in Toronto.

The TFPC actively participates on the Greater Toronto Area Agriculture Action Committee (GTA AAC). The GTA AAC is a unique partnership involving the four regional municipalities of Halton, Peel, York and Durham, the four Greater Toronto Area Federations of Agriculture (Halton, Peel, York and Durham), the City of Toronto, the TFPC, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and the private sector.

The TFPC participated in the development of the *Greater Golden Horseshoe Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy, Food and Farming: An Action Plan 2021* (Attachment 5). The Action Plan provides five broad strategies and numerous specific actions to revitalize the region's food and farming cluster which contributes \$12.3 billion to the provincial economy. The Action Plan outlines a 10-year vision for the Golden Horseshoe food and farming cluster and addresses the serious challenges impeding its growth, including multiple and conflicting government policies and regulations, rising fuel costs, a lack of policy integration, urbanization, competition for land, gaps in infrastructure and traffic congestion.

One of the opportunities identified to achieve the vision of the Action Plan is to "link food, farming, and health" by working closely with a broad range of stakeholders to educate and inform consumers about healthy food products from the Golden Horseshoe. Three actions were identified to seize this opportunity: 1) increasing local food literacy with a focus on youth; 2) secure the mandate for local health units within Golden Horseshoe communities to promote increased consumption of local food; and, 3) expand the use, management and impact of the "Foodland Ontario" brand.

The Action Plan has been endorsed by all of the regional municipalities, as well as the Cities of Hamilton and Niagara. Toronto City Council endorsed the Action Plan in April 2012, and the TFPC will work with regional partners to implement aspects of the Action Plan.

## **Food strategy**

The TFPC plays an important role in the ongoing evolution of the Toronto Food Strategy. The Food Strategy appears on the agenda of all TFPC meetings to facilitate in depth reports and knowledge-sharing between the staff team and TFPC members. This provides expanded capacity for the implementation of the Food Strategy, and ensures stronger linkages between Toronto Public Health and a range of community food initiatives. It also enables stronger linkages between the TFPC and City of Toronto government. Council members, the Food Strategy Team and other Toronto Public Health staff work in partnership on the following Food Strategy initiatives:

- A community kitchens literature review and survey of kitchen facilities in recreation centres was undertaken and will be developed into a tool to support public access to these kitchens.
- Increasing access to healthy, affordable food is a key priority of the Food Strategy. TFPC members are partners in the Mobile Good Food Market pilot, and have advised the Food Strategy on the potential for bulk produce purchasing opportunities for community agencies.

- The TFPC led a community consultation on the Soil Assessment Protocol, developed by TPH, asking urban gardeners how the tool can be used most effectively by the community. The Protocol is currently being designed into a clear language guide for community and institutional use.
- "Feeding Diversity: Community Access and Commercialization of World Crops" is a project developed in partnership with the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, funded by the McConnell Foundation to promote access to culturally appropriate, locally-grown vegetables in low income communities. The TFPC has linked Vineland to community partners through the World Crop learning garden initiatives which provides world crop seedlings to community gardens. The TFPC has also facilitated connections with diverse regional partners as part of the project.

### **Toronto Youth Food Policy Council**

The Toronto Youth Food Policy Council's (TYFPC) activities were supported by staff of Toronto Public Health, regularly engaging youth in events, discussions and policy-making. The TYFPC seeks to mobilize and engage youth to make change by building a just food system. The ten member Council provides youth with a vehicle to network, share opportunities, learn from one another, and connect to community food initiatives. The TYFPC strives to become Toronto's leading youth voice in sustainable municipal food policy change. At their well attended monthly meetings the youth consider a variety of food issues. The outcomes of meetings are reported back to the TFPC, and youth priorities are presented to the TFPC and the Food Strategy team.

The TYFPC worked with TPH staff on the "So You(th) Think You Can Cook" cooking competition held in the Journey to Your Good Health pavilion at the Royal Winter Fair in November. This year, groups of youth between the ages of 10 to 25 were challenged to cook a healthy snack in 15 minutes.

### **Cross jurisdictional food policy initiatives**

TFPC members and staff are working with provincial and national partners on a number of food policy initiatives. The TFPC is member of the Food and Nutrition Strategy Design Group convened by diverse health and food partners to advocate for a provincial food and nutrition strategy. The TFPC worked with Sustain Ontario to ensure farm and food issues were considered as part of the provincial election campaign in 2011. The TFPC has been consulted by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and Sustain Ontario on the development of a Local Food Act. Finally, the TFPC has advocated for a coordinated Canadian food strategy at the federal level. TFPC members and staff actively participate in Food Secure Canada, a national network working towards zero hunger, healthy and safe food, and a sustainable food system. Through Food Secure Canada, the TFPC was involved in the creation of the People's Food Policy and have been engaged in defining the federal level policy changes necessary to support a shift to a sustainable, equitable, local and economically viable food system.

## **Conclusion**

TFPC meetings, open to the public, will continue to be engaging and relevant and will continue to be an excellent vehicle for information sharing and spirited discussion. The TFPC will continue to act upon and implement the above priorities, continue to inform the Food Strategy, and continue to provide leadership and community engagement on food systems issues.

---

Helene St. Jacques  
Toronto Food Policy Council  
Tel: 416-392-1107  
Fax: 416-392-1357  
Email: [helene@informaresearch.com](mailto:helene@informaresearch.com)

---

Councillor Shelley Carroll  
Phone: 416-392-4038  
Fax: 416-392-4101  
Email: [councillor\\_carroll@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_carroll@toronto.ca)