

# PLANT IT!

## A Healthy Community Food System Plan for the City of Peterborough

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## Introduction

Peterborough has an established dynamic food community with food grown and produced locally. It is time for food issues to be included in the Official Plan for Peterborough to ensure that Peterborough provides a healthy and sustainable environment for all its residents. This includes increased access to healthy and affordable food for people of all income levels, with local growers and producers receiving fair compensation for their goods. The projected outcomes of applying a food lens in planning decisions go beyond improved health to include increased prosperity by making Peterborough a “food destination” with improved job opportunities.

## Food Security and Planning

A healthy Peterborough requires that all parts of the food system be addressed. To do this adequately the City of Peterborough must strive for food security for all of its population. People must have an adequate income to be able to afford to buy healthy food. The Peterborough Community Food Network defines food security as:

***A community enjoys food security when:***

- ***all people, at all times, have physical & economic access to nutritious, safe, personally and culturally appropriate foods,***
- ***food is produced in ways that are environmentally sound, socially just, and promote community self reliance, and,***
- ***food is provided in a manner that promotes human dignity.***

Barriers to food security include:

- Poverty
- Underemployment and unemployment
- Lack of affordable housing and high utility costs
- Lack of household and storage facilities for food
- Lack of transportation
- Poor access/assistance for people with disabilities
- Absence of food retail locations and farmers’ markets
- Lack of community garden and urban agriculture opportunities
- Lack of a strong culture for the role of food in building a healthy community

Food policy initiatives and healthy food policies that are community based and represent the needs of all community members can work to reduce barriers and improve success. Food also brings people together and can have a positive impact by allowing for opportunities for social integration, a sense of belonging and overall well-being.

## Food System and Planning

There is a link between food systems and good land use planning. The Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) developed a call to action for planners and community members alike to address food system issues with good planning mechanisms.

***“OPPI calls upon planners, citizens and all stakeholders to make healthy community planning, and in particular, planning for healthy food systems, a priority. Our members are committed to creating and fostering healthy communities throughout Ontario.”***

The food produced, distributed and sold within a region can play a major role in how well the dietary needs of the population are met. Communities that have ready access to a sustainable supply of healthy, locally grown and produced foods are less vulnerable to external factors that can affect the nutritional quality and/or quantity of foods available. Municipal government and municipal policy have multiple levers to shift the food system. An example of how policy can support the food production system is the current City of Peterborough Community Gardens Policy. The connection between land use planning decisions and food environments is critical, but less obvious than active transportation (e.g., walkability and bikeability).

Food can be considered an integral part of the Official Plan as it supports a healthy, sustainable, local food system including food production, local processing, marketing and distribution, consumption and disposal. In each of these areas there are a number of examples of how either the Official Plan or municipal policies can support food access.

### Food System Opportunities

#### 1. **Production: Plant It! Grow It!**

**Current City of Peterborough Official Plan applicable sections include: Growth Management Strategy (2.4), Natural Areas (3.3), Residential (4.2), Commercial Area (4.3), Major Open Space (4.5), Agriculture (4.6), Parkland Policies (6), Neighbourhood Improvement and Social Planning (8), Implementation (9)**

- Connection to local farmers’
- Set aside land for agricultural purposes
- Policy, by-laws, infrastructure, technology to support the Peterborough Food System
- Increased support for urban agriculture and urban forestry (e.g., grow food in parks, gardens (fruit trees, vegetables)); backyard hens
- Community improvement plans for municipal public spaces and parks including edible landscaping and planting of fruit trees

- Community gardens (including soil testing for community garden land)
- Promotion of roof top gardens including zoning by-laws to encourage the establishment of more gardens
- Land use policies that facilitate large urban-scale agriculture

## 2. **Processing: Cook It!**

**Current City of Peterborough Official Plan applicable sections include: Growth Management Strategy (2.4), Residential (4.2), Commercial Area (4.3), Neighbourhood Improvement and Social Planning (8), Implementation (9)**

- Policy, by-laws, infrastructure, technology to support the Peterborough food system
- Planning has a role to play in supporting the processing of local food
- Incubator kitchen
- Commercial kitchen
- Community bake oven
- Food-related business
- Facilitate and support locally owned food processing
- Flexible, regional food processing to add value to the economy and stimulate development

## 3. **Marketing and Distribution: Sell It! Learn About It! Cook It!**

**Current City of Peterborough Official Plan applicable sections include: Growth Management Strategy (2.4), Natural Areas (3.3), Residential (4.2), Commercial Area (4.3), Major Open Space (4.5), Parkland Policies (6), Neighbourhood Improvement and Social Planning (8), Implementation (9)**

- Affordable healthy choices in areas where access to food is limited. Examples of initiatives to address “food deserts” include: zoning and financial incentives to stores in underserved areas (e.g., permits for convenience stores conditional on availability of vegetables and fruit, grants to buy refrigerators for fresh produce, zoning by-laws to allow for street vendors with healthy food choices, approval for grocery stores, tax incentives)
- Zoning for a downtown location for the Kawartha Community Food Hub where food skills can be enhanced and a new healthy food system developed. Ideally this should be located close to or as part of a permanent site for food festivals and farmers’ markets.
- Culinary tourism
- Restaurants selling local food
- Food and vendor contracts re: healthy food availability in City owned facilities
- Zoning around school areas to support provincial school food and beverage policies so that students will not have the opportunity to leave the school property and go to

- stores/fast food outlets located in the vicinity
- Plans for future subdivisions that include a review for healthy food including access to healthy food, community gardens, public spaces for growing food
- Farmers' Market promotions and subsidies as a way to increase community food self-reliance
- Policies, regulations and legislation to support the development of regional food clusters that enhance local food consumption through collaborative local food events and promotions. A local example is *Visit Our Table – A Culinary Journey of Peterborough and the Kawarthas*, hosted by Peterborough and the Kawarthas Tourism ([www.visitourtable.com](http://www.visitourtable.com))
- Local procurement policies for food offered and sold in city owned facilities (e.g., recreation centres, parks, childcare centres and seniors' homes) or city-run programs (e.g., recreation division summer camps)
- Restricting approval for fast food drive-through restaurants

#### 4. **Consumption: Eat It! Enjoy It! Learn About It!**

**Current City of Peterborough Official Plan applicable sections include: Growth Management Strategy (2.4), Natural Areas (3.3), Major Open Space (4.5), Parkland Policies (6,) Neighbourhood Improvement and Social Planning (8), Implementation (9)**

- Zoning for Kawartha Community Food Hub and a permanent site for food festivals and farmers' markets downtown
- Food festivals and events
- Community gardens
- Farmers' markets
- Restaurants selling local food
- Healthy food availability in city owned facilities (e.g., community centres, arenas, Wellness Centre, parks)
- Park use: Pizza garden with community bake oven
- Institutional food service (including childcare, hospitals, school boards, post-secondary education) featuring locally procured and healthy food.
- Support the creation of a universal school meal program in partnership with provincial and federal governments.

#### 5. **Disposal: Compost It!**

**Current City of Peterborough Official Plan applicable sections include: Growth Management Strategy (2.4), Implementation (9)**

- Role to play in reducing local food waste
- Importance of returning nutrients to farmland

## Community Food Network Recommendations

1. Municipal support for the Kawartha Community Food Hub, with zoning for a downtown location for related food programs and activities. This Hub will provide a space where community members in the City can access fresh nourishing food and learn about growing and preparing food. By bringing together community members, the food hub will enhance social inclusion and help develop a culture of food. The centre will also be an economic hub for Peterborough with opportunities for food processing social enterprises to develop in an incubator kitchen and local food-related businesses will have access to a commercial kitchen at this site.
2. Zoning for a permanent site for food festivals and farmers' markets that is close to or part of the Kawartha Community Food Hub. This would provide clean, working hand-washing basins, sinks, washrooms, and refrigeration allowing more small local groups to compete with travelling commercial operators.
3. Municipal support of a \$100 Healthy Food Supplement for Social Assistance recipients. This supplement would increase the buying power of people living on low incomes who are most likely to spend their money in our local economy.
4. Zoning by-laws that allow for retailers of healthy foods such as supermarkets, small and mid-size grocery stores and farmers' markets as well as community/urban agriculture initiatives such as community gardens, community bake ovens, edible landscaping and roof top gardens in residential, commercial and institutional designations.
5. Land use designations for small-scale food processing facilities and distribution centres for locally-produced food.
6. Zoning bylaws that enable the community to integrate opportunities for community/urban agriculture by developing land use designations that permit community gardens and agriculture uses as accessory uses for community facilities such as places of worship; schools; and health, cultural, or recreational institutions.
7. Preserve local food production capacity by restricting the fragmentation of agricultural lands, protecting land with agricultural potential, and preservation of rural and cultural landscapes through land use designations and transportation plans.
8. Develop land use designations that support small-scale home industries and home occupations, including food-based enterprises that are supportive of agricultural activities in areas with an agricultural designation.

9. Develop the infrastructure required to establish distribution and/or processing centres for local foods, agricultural warehouses, abattoirs and other agriculturally-related commercial, industrial and/or institutional facilities and activities that build local food self-sufficiency in partnership with County of Peterborough.
10. Ensure that the political environment is conducive to stronger food security by addressing housing and labour markets, preventing cuts to social assistance, promoting policies and by-laws that support agriculture, protect the food supply, and create incentives and funding for local food security initiatives.

## Conclusion

A healthy food system brings together all the pieces of the food system to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of a community. By including our recommendations in the Official Plan, the Community Food Network believes that you will be:

- Fostering food-friendly neighbourhoods
- Promoting social justice
- Supporting nutrition and disease prevention
- Building a stronger community
- Creating local, diverse and green economic development
- Protecting and sustaining the environment
- Empowering people with food skills and information
- Nourishing links between our City and the surrounding County.

For more information about this submission please contact:

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