



# JustFOOD

## Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART B - DECEMBER 2023

HALIFAX



HALIFAX FOOD  
POLICY ALLIANCE

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# Acknowledgements

## Land Acknowledgement

The meetings, work, and envisioned goals of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* take place on the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq First Nation.

We make this land acknowledgement to recognize Indigenous claims to unceded territory and Indigenous lineages of agriculture, which directly uses the land for food. We do so in order to express respect to the land and elders who were here before us and to acknowledge the critical importance of consciously working towards reconciliation in our work. Indigenous Peoples were growing, harvesting, hunting, fishing, and collecting food in a healthy, sustainable, and just way for generations before colonization. We specifically acknowledge the Mi'kmaq for their continued stewardship of the land.

This acknowledgement challenges us to ask questions that bear directly on this project, such as: how to link to Mi'kmaq governance, what is the role of treaty, and what implications does this work have for the land and sea that local food comes from?

In mainstream settler culture, it is easy to forget how our region nourishes us. As we consider how to increase access to food and strengthen the food system, we must uplift Indigenous voices and center Indigenous wisdom and values of ecological health, social justice, and food sovereignty.



Maps: 2023 North American Indigenous Games



## Acknowledgements

The *JustFOOD Action Plan* was developed with input from municipal and provincial governments, community partner organizations, and HRM residents who generously shared their wisdom and experiences. In particular, we are grateful for the contributions of the African Nova Scotian and Black Food Sovereignty and Justice Working Group, the Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Justice Working Group, and No One Is Illegal - Halifax/Kjipuktuk.

We give special thanks to members of the JustFOOD team, including:

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# Introduction

## Strategies to Advance Year One Priority Recommendations

On March 7th, 2023, [Halifax Regional Council endorsed Part A](#) of the JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region. Part A sets the stage for our regional food system, captures public engagement findings, and establishes 56 recommendations for positive food system change. At this time, Regional Council also directed Mayor Savage to make HRM a signatory to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), an international protocol aimed at tackling food-related issues at the municipal level. The Principles of Part A, based on the [MUFPP Framework for Action](#), establish the foundations of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*.

Part A established key next steps for implementation:

- **Establish JustFOOD Working Groups**
- **Develop Implementation Strategies and Formalize Commitments**
- **Form a Food Policy Council (Halifax Food Council)**
- **Monitor Progress**

Part B is a practical document, presenting the **Implementation Strategies** that will be used to advance the In Progress and Year One priority recommendations identified in Part A. The Implementation Strategies outline the steps to advance the recommendations; confirm roles of key leads and partners; establish outcomes and performance measures; and articulate resourcing and budget requirements, including a 2024/25 Municipal budget request for some. The Implementation Strategies are designed to increase the capacity of Municipal staff and communities to advance food action beyond the initiative, expanding impact through provision of training, food literacy supports, and tools to support ongoing food action.

Many Implementation Strategies were developed in partnership with community, including the Indigenous Working Group (internal to the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre), the African Nova Scotian and Black (ANSB) Working Group, and No One Is Illegal – Nova Scotia.

## Areas of Work

Part B Implementation Strategies increase collective capacity for action through six “buckets of work”:

**Formalizing Governance & Establishing Community Food Grants**

**Growing Municipal Capacity for Action**

**Maximizing Municipal Assets for Food Access, Production, & Literacy**

**Understanding Food Resources & Community Vulnerabilities**







**Strengthening Emergency Food Planning & Responses**

**Collaborating Towards Food System Change**

The following image highlights the major Year One initiatives that fall under each bucket of work. While placed under a bucket of work, initiatives overlap and advance the other areas of work towards the broader objective of a more healthy, just, and resilient food system for our region.

# JUSTFOOD HALIFAX PART B

## IMPLEMENTATION OF YEAR 1 & IN PROGRESS PRIORITIES

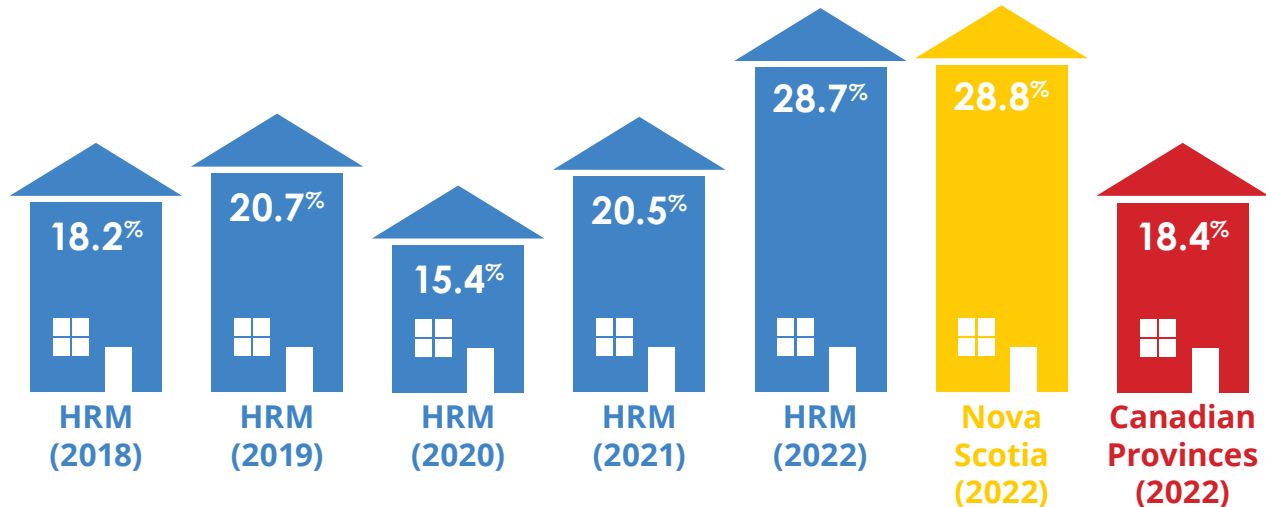
 <b>FORMALIZING GOVERNANCE &amp; ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY GRANT</b>	 <b>GROWING MUNICIPAL CAPACITY FOR ACTION</b>	 <b>MAXIMIZING MUNICIPAL ASSETS FOR FOOD ACCESS, PRODUCTION, &amp; LITERACY</b>	 <b>UNDERSTANDING FOOD RESOURCES &amp; COMMUNITY VULNERABILITIES</b>	 <b>STRENGTHENING EMERGENCY FOOD PLANNING</b>	 <b>COLLABORATING TOWARDS FOOD SYSTEM CHANGE</b>
<p>Stand-up Halifax Food Council (EAC fledge) to oversee JustFOOD</p> <p>Resource HFC: 2FTE &amp; Funds for operating and community participation</p> <p>Establish Community Food Grants</p> <p>Fund ANSB FTE, Advisory &amp; Pilots</p> <p>Fund Indigenous FTE &amp; Advisory</p> <p>Expand Virtual Food Hub</p> <p>Progress Monitoring Framework</p>	<p>Grow municipal food team to 4 FTE (+ urban ag specialist, emergency food, &amp; food specialist)</p> <p>Build capacity &amp; food lens through municipal working group(s)</p> <p>Collaborate with Parks&amp; Rec, Planning, SolidWaste, Environment &amp; Climate Change, EMO, Horticulture, IT, Corp Comms, &amp; other departments</p>	<p>Fund &amp; resource new Community Plots &amp; existing Community Gardens Programs</p> <p>Launch Community Orchard &amp; Vermicompost Pilots</p> <p>Create directory of municipal sites for food distribution</p> <p>Launch backyard sharing matchmaking program and land sharing resources</p>	<p>Advance the Halifax Food Asset Map</p> <p>Work with Municipal &amp; community partners (Public Safety, HalifACT, Planning, United Way, FeedNS, Province, Public Health, and others) to better understand community vulnerabilities &amp; inequities</p>	<p>Hire Food Truck Coordinator</p> <p>Work with Second Harvest to match supply with demand &amp; maximize emergency food truck for Community Food Distribution Pilot</p> <p>Advance Community Food Partner agreements</p> <p>Advance Emergency Food Playbook</p> <p>Explore Connection between Food &amp; Climate</p>	<p>Outreach to NS Food &amp; Beverage Strategy leadership</p> <p>Tap into Milan Urban Food Policy Pact</p> <p>Support Regional Food Hub</p> <p>Partner with FeedNS for Social Supermarket &amp; Rural Food Pilots</p> <p>Partner with NOII to support migrant workers</p> <p>Continue support for Mobile Food Market</p> <p>Advocate for income supports &amp; universal school food</p>

## Food Insecurity in HRM

Part B advances actions and initiatives to strengthen our food system. **However, we must also acknowledge that increased advocacy and action is essential to address inadequate income, the root cause of food insecurity.** Since the publication of Part A, rising costs of living have continued to outpace incomes, and more residents are living with food insecurity. The percentage of people in our Region living in food insecure households dramatically increased to 20.5% in 2022, indicating that more than one in five households or, conservatively, as many as 100,000 HRM residents are food insecure<sup>1</sup>.

The infographic below shows a brief decrease in household food insecurity to 15.5% in 2021, likely due to the short-term, protective impact of COVID-19 income supports<sup>2</sup>. Research continues to demonstrate that access to secure and adequate income is the one intervention that consistently reduces rates of food insecurity<sup>3</sup>. Conversely, research examining the impact of charitable responses to food insecurity, such as food banks, has demonstrated that while they offer temporary access to food, they are often not serving the most food insecure and do not address the root causes of household food insecurity<sup>4</sup>.

### PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS LIVING IN FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS



<sup>1</sup> References for HFI Infographic: Statistics Canada. 2023. Special tabulation, based on 2022 Canadian Income Survey. PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research. "New Data on household food insecurity in 2022," 2022. <https://proof.utoronto.ca/2023/new-data-on-household-food-insecurity-in-2022/>

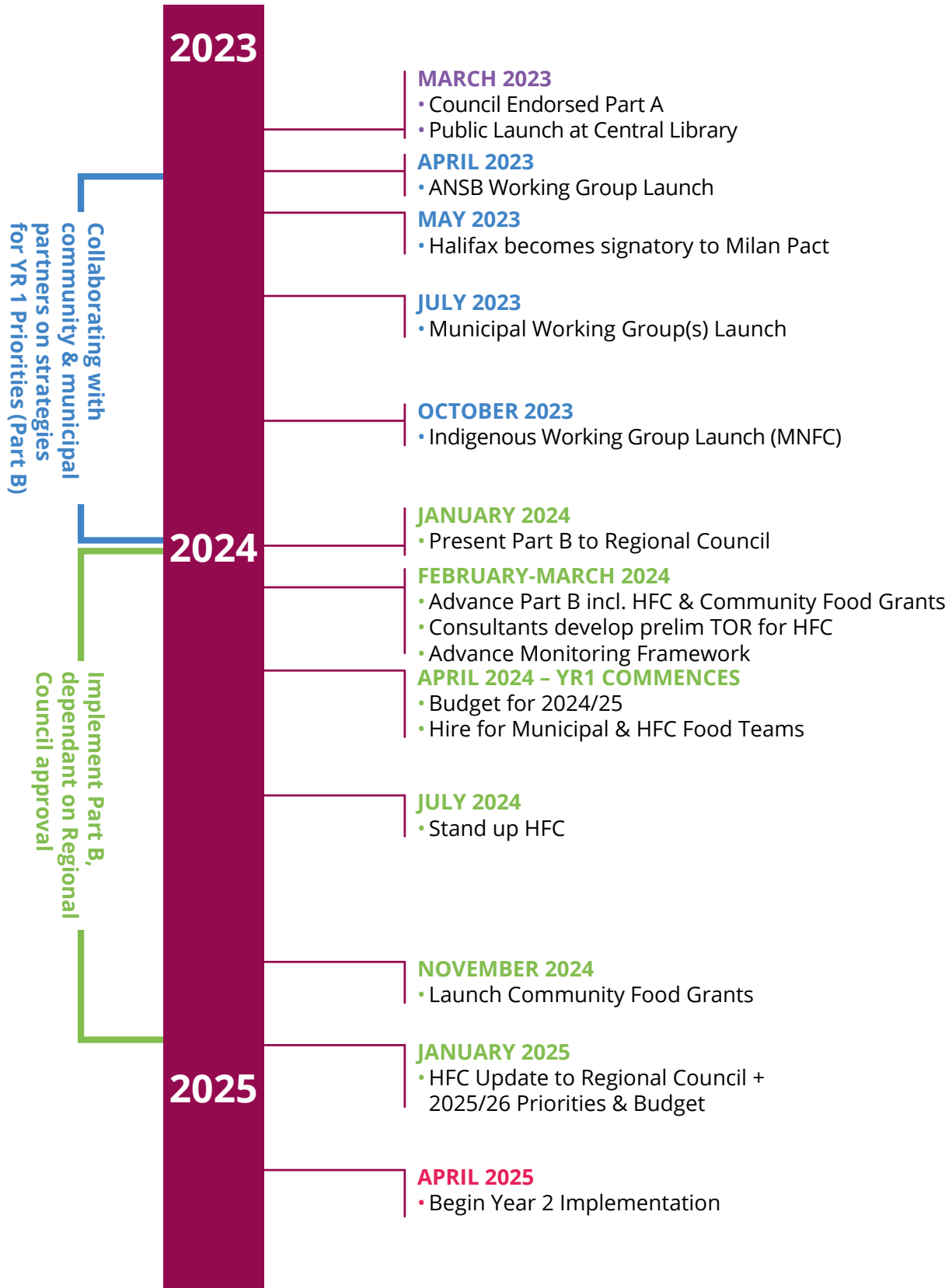
<sup>2</sup> Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. "Living Wages in Nova Scotia 2022. Working for a Living. Not Living to Work," 2022. <https://policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Nova%20Scotia%20Office/2022/09/livingwagesinns2022final.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> PROOF. What Can be Done to Reduce Food Insecurity in Canada? Accessed December 2023. <https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/what-can-be-done-to-reduce-food-insecurity-in-canada/>

<sup>4</sup> Food First Newfoundland and Labrador. 2023. "Rethinking Food Charity". <https://www.foodfirstnl.ca/rethinking-food-charity>

# Timeline

This timeline outlines the steps that have already been or will be completed between March 2023 (Council’s endorsement of Part A) and April 2025 (covering the first year of Plan implementation).

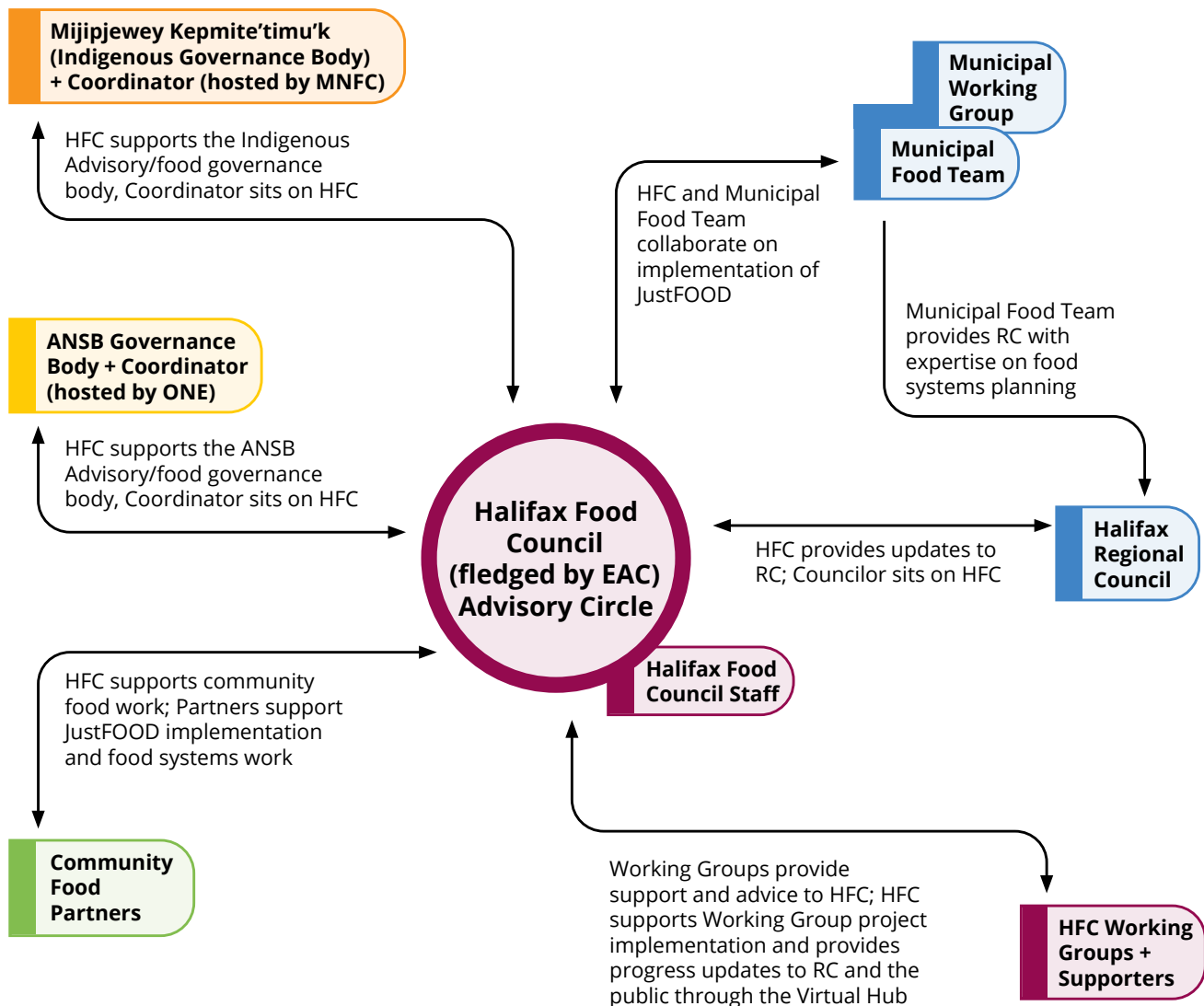




## Establishment of Governance Bodies

The success of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* continues to depend on collective action and collaboration across governments, communities, businesses, and organizations. Part B proposes **four main governance bodies** that will work together to implement, monitor, and connect the *JustFOOD Action Plan* to Halifax Regional Council, Plan partners, and the broader community:

1. Halifax Food Council (HFC);
2. Municipal Food Team;
3. African Nova Scotian and Black Food Governance Body; and
4. Indigenous Food Governance Body.



## Halifax Food Council

A key step in advancing the *JustFOOD Action Plan* recommendations is the establishment of an independent, funded, and staffed food council to replace the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA).

**The Halifax Food Council (HFC)** and its associated **Advisory Circle** will lead collective action across sectors, oversee the implementation and monitoring of the Plan, and establish a grant program to support community-based food initiatives that advance *JustFOOD Action Plan* priorities. The HFC will also share tools and research to support community-led food action through the new Virtual Community Food Hub (Implementation Strategies **IS 1, 1b.i, 5, 9d**).

## Municipal Food Team

The creation of a Municipal Food Team will increase Municipal capacity for collaboration and food action. The Municipal Food Team will work to maximize Municipal resources, strengthen emergency food responses, increase our understanding of community vulnerabilities and food resources, and support the implementation of Municipally-led recommendations. The Team will build Municipal knowledge and capacity to support food systems planning, urban agriculture, food and climate initiatives, and emergency food planning (**IS 6a, 17, 32, 45b, 45b.ii, 56b**). The Team will also work directly with the HFC to advance the implementation of the *JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan*.

## ANSB and Indigenous Food Governance Bodies

The *JustFOOD Action Plan* continues to support food sovereignty and justice efforts across the region. Part B proposes the establishment of Indigenous and ANSB food governance bodies that operate independently from but in collaboration with the HFC. The Implementation Strategies (**IS 22, 29b**) include support for the addition of an Indigenous Food Coordinator and the establishment of an Indigenous food governance body as well as for the addition of an ANSB Food Coordinator, and the establishment of an ANSB food governance body.

## Next Steps


Part B establishes the governance structure, partnerships, initiatives, resources, and monitoring framework required to support ongoing implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* and progression of Year One priority recommendations. The [Timeline](#) outlines the next steps for Year One (2024/25) of the Plan. Future updates on the progression of the Plan and advancement of priority *JustFOOD* recommendations will be led by the HFC, in consultation with other governance bodies and Plan partners. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact [suite of indicators](#) form the backbone of the new ***JustFOOD Halifax Monitoring Framework*** (**IS 9d**). The Virtual Community Food Hub, HFC reports, annual updates to Halifax Regional Council, and the 5 year Plan review (2027/28) will all provide transparent and consistent communication on the progress of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* for the *Halifax Region*.

# Summary Table

**Y1** = Actions to be progressed during YEAR ONE of Plan implementation





 = Completion of a YEAR ONE Recommendation

**IP** = Actions that were IN PROGRESS, to be further advanced during YEAR ONE

 = Emerging Opportunity

RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET	
<b>GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATIONS</b>				
<p><b>Y1</b></p>	<p><b>1.</b> Establish and fund a Food Council.</p> <p><b>IS 1</b></p>	<p>The <b>Halifax Food Council (HFC)</b> will replace and expand the work of Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA), within a fledging organization (Ecology Action Centre) to reduce administrative burdens and allow for exploration of benefits of legal incorporation. The HFC Advisory Circle will coordinate collective action for positive change; increase and center community participation in governance; support and fund community-based food initiatives; advise governments, institutions, and others; and guide and evaluate the implementation of the JustFOOD Action Plan. The HFC will establish a collaborative governance space and resources to support the identification and realization of shared goals for the regional food system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire and collaborate with consultant(s) to develop governance relationship, legal terms, and financial mechanisms between HFC and EAC</li> <li>• Advance Advisory Circle TOR</li> <li>• Formalize partnership between the HFC, EAC, and HRM</li> <li>• Integrate (1) Indigenous and (2) ANSB food governance models</li> <li>• Establish Advisory Circle and hire HFC staff</li> </ul>	<p>Fledge and resource the Halifax Food Council, through EAC, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultant, lawyer and financial advisor fees</li> <li>• 2 FTEs</li> <li>• Supplies &amp; expenses</li> <li>• Advisory circles, honorariums, engagement</li> <li>• Virtual Food Hub</li> </ul> <p>Total Budget: \$282,399.73</p> <p><b>Municipal 2024/25 Ask: \$251,493.48</b></p>
<p><b>Y1</b></p>	<p><b>1b.i.</b> Develop a sustainable funding stream operated by the Food Council.</p> <p><b>IS 1b.i</b></p>	<p>The <b>Community Food Grants Program</b> is an independent, arms-length funding stream (administered by the HFC) to support community-based organizations and grassroots initiatives that advance and align with the JustFOOD Action Plan. The Program will reduce application barriers, support program evaluation, and prioritize under-served communities.</p>	<p>Upon establishment of the HFC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop eligibility criteria, priority objectives, and evaluation frameworks</li> <li>• Create supports for application, evaluation, &amp; capacity building</li> <li>• Launch and evaluate Program</li> </ul>	<p>Establish funds for Community Food Grants and resources to support applications &amp; build capacity.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$185,718.75</p> <p><b>Municipal 2024/25 Ask: \$185,718.75</b></p>
<p><b>Y1</b></p>	<p><b>2.</b> Indigenous &amp; ANSB Food Governance Bodies and associated funding</p> <p><b>IS 22 &amp; 29b</b></p>	<p>See <b>Recommendations 22 and 23e</b> for details on the Indigenous Advisory and Coordinator</p> <p>See <b>Recommendations 29 and 29b</b> for details on the ANSB Advisory, Coordinator, and Pilots</p>		

RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
<p><b>IP</b> <b>3a.</b> Continue creating an enabling municipal environment for good food.</p> <p><b>IS 6a, 17, 32, 33d, 45b, 45b.ii, &amp; 56b</b></p>	<p>A four member <b>Municipal Food Team</b> will be established to build the necessary capacity to deliver municipally- led <i>JustFOOD</i> recommendations and bring a food system lens to municipal initiatives including planning, policies, practices and infrastructure.</p> <p>See <b>Recommendations 6a, 17, 32, 33d, 45b, 45b.ii, and 56b</b> for details on municipally-led recommendations and new roles to support their delivery.</p>		
<p><b>IP</b> <b>4b.</b> Continue to advocate for collaboration across municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government, and with Indigenous nations.</p>	<p>Continue to seek to align development and implementation of the <i>JustFOOD Action Plan</i> with Provincial-level efforts, such as the forthcoming <b><i>Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy</i></b>. The HFPA played an active role during the consultation for this strategy. Many themes and priorities from Part A of the JustFOOD Action Plan are reflected in the Provincial "<a href="#">What We Heard</a>" report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The HFC and the Municipality will continue to engage with the Province as they advance the <i>Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy</i>, seeking opportunities for collaboration and amplification where possible.</li> </ul>	<p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p><b>Municipal 2024/25 Ask: \$0.00</b></p>
<p><b>Y1</b> <b>5.</b> Create a virtual community food hub.</p> <p><b>IS 5</b></p>	<p>The <b>Virtual Community Food Hub</b> will share resources, programs, funding opportunities and research to support community food action. The Hub will report on the progress of the JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan. It will be the home of the Halifax Food Council, the Community Food Grants, and a place to connect with other community food actors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand justfoodhalifax.ca into the Virtual Food Hub</li> <li>• Develop "home" for the HFC and Community Food Grants</li> <li>• Create platform to report on progress of JustFOOD</li> <li>• Update existing tools, link to resources (Food Asset Map), and create new supports like events calendar, researcher profiles, fora, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Web and graphic designer.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$1,389.98.</p> <p><b>Municipal 2024/25 Ask: \$0.00, included as part of the HFC Budget (IS 1, Rec 1).</b></p>
<p><b>IP</b> <b>6a.</b> Develop the HRM Food Asset Map.</p> <p><b>IS 6a</b></p>	<p>The <b>HRM Food Asset Map</b> is a visual, geographic database of food resources in the Halifax Region. The Map will be a communal, open data resource to increase understanding of the regional food system; enable the tracking of changes over time; and support data collection and analysis to identify community vulnerabilities and strengths.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress research partnerships</li> <li>• Procure consultant to progress Food Asset Framework and ID &amp; incorporate datasets</li> <li>• Establish protocols for data management</li> <li>• Create public interface, test &amp; refine</li> </ul>	<p>Data consultant and training in food asset mapping</p> <p>Total Budget: \$25,300.00</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/25): \$25,300.00</b></p>

RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
 <p><b>8.</b> Pursue membership in Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP).</p>	<p>Halifax Regional Municipality became a <b>signatory city to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact</b> (MUFPP) in May, 2023. The HFPA is in regular contact with MUFPP representatives and continues to use MUFPP resources to inform the development of food system monitoring tools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain contact with MUFPP representatives and review training tools and supports as available</li> <li>• Continue to use the MUFPP framework to support the JustFOOD Halifax Monitoring Framework</li> </ul>	<p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</b></p>
 <p><b>9d.</b> Use key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate Plan progress.</p> <p><b>IS 9d</b></p>	<p>The <i>JustFOOD Action Plan</i> requires a robust Monitoring Framework to evaluate progress and impact over time, inform revisions, and guide strategic adjustments. The <b>Monitoring Framework</b> establishes 29 indicators adapted from the <i>Milan Urban Food Policy Pact</i> to be reported on annually by the HFC to gauge the state of the regional food system, measure <i>JustFOOD</i> progress, and track food system action or changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop data collection, analysis, and sharing plans</li> <li>• Develop reporting plans to communicate key findings and changes over time</li> </ul>	<p>Open data platform and reporting on monitoring framework and evaluation of performance indicators</p> <p>Total Budget: \$0.00; included in the HFC Budget (IS 1, Rec 1)</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</b></p>
<b>SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
 <p><b>11.</b> Develop programs and resources that address the rising cost of food in collaboration with the Province, academic institutions, and other partners.</p> <p><b>ES 11</b></p>	<p>The <b>Feed Nova Scotia Innovation and Learning Lab</b> is progressing additional <i>JustFOOD Action Plan</i> recommendations, including the advancement of a <b>Social Supermarket Pilot and a Rural Food Access Pilot</b>, both of which will promote affordable and dignified access to food.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct community engagement for both Pilots</li> <li>• Establish partnerships with community food actors</li> <li>• Implement and evaluate Pilots</li> </ul>	<p>Budgets for both Pilots will be determined through the design process, with FeedNS committing up to <b>\$170,000</b> to support implementation.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$170,000.00</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</b></p>
 <p><b>12e and 12e.i.</b> Collaborate... to provide easily accessible social services to migrant workers in agriculture and develop multiple-language information packages to share with workers.</p> <p><b>IS 12e, 12e.i</b></p>	<p><b>No One Is Illegal-NS</b> were key advisers for JustFOOD Part A recommendations, developed in consultation with migrant workers across Nova Scotia. NOII-NS has designed two Pilots to reduce the barriers workers face in accessing critical services and resources, easing their transition into working and living in our Region: <b>English for Migrant Workers (EMW) Pilot and Welcome Bags Pilot.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare materials and recruit staff</li> <li>• Engage with workers in HRM on both Pilots</li> <li>• Deliver and evaluate Pilots</li> </ul>	<p>No One Is Illegal (NOII) - NS Pilots: Welcome Bags &amp; English Classes.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$42,032.90</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$42,032.90</b></p>




RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
<p><b>IP</b> <b>15a.</b> Promote participatory education, training, and research.</p> <p><b>IS 1b.i, 5, 6a, 9d, 12e, 12e.i, 17, 29, 32, 33d, &amp; 56b</b></p>	<p>Fostering participatory education, training and research is incorporated into many of the Implementation Strategies, which include programs and funding to support community capacity building, knowledge sharing, and engagement.</p> <p>See <b>Recommendations 1b.i, 5, 6a, 9d, 12e, 12e.i, 17, 29, 32, 33d, and 56b</b> for more details.</p>		
<p><b>Y1</b> <b>17.</b> Use municipal facilities and assets to offer food programs, grow food, and support public food infrastructure.</p> <p><b>IS 17</b></p>	<p>The <b>Community Orchard Pilot</b> supports the integration and maximization of Municipal assets for food demonstration, production, access, and literacy by planting fruit/nut trees on centrally located, well-accessed Municipal land. The Pilot is an opportunity for HRM to expand and revitalize the Leighton Dillman Community Orchard and build community capacity for tree planting and care through training &amp; literacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize and host training opportunities on planting and caring for trees</li> <li>• Develop and execute maintenance plan</li> <li>• Install interpretive signage, prepare site, plant trees</li> <li>• Evaluate impact and explore expansion to other site(s)</li> </ul>	<p>Community Orchard Pilot: supplies, labour, and training.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$8,840.00</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$8,840.00</b></p>
<p><b>Y1</b> <b>22 and 23e.</b> Establish and fund an Indigenous food-governance model. Fund a full-time food coordinator position at the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC)</p> <p><b>IS 22 &amp; 23e</b></p>	<p>The creation of an <b>Indigenous Food Coordinator</b> role and the advancement of an <b>Indigenous food governance body</b> will support Indigenous food sovereignty, justice, and security efforts across the Region. They will work with the HFC to promote collaboration and mutual support between Indigenous and settler communities, centering indigenous perspectives and approaches in the progression of <i>JustFOOD</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire the Coordinator through the MNFC</li> <li>• Develop ways to collaborate &amp; mutually support between HFC, Municipal Food Team, and Indigenous Coordinator &amp; Mijipjewey Kepmite'timu'k (Indigenous Food Governance Body)</li> <li>• ID priority projects &amp; JustFOOD recommendations</li> </ul>	<p>Indigenous Coordinator, Advisory Group through MNFC:</p> <p>Total Budget: \$80,080</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$52,584</b></p>
<p><b>Y1</b> <b>29.</b> Support the development of an ANSB governance body. Develop community infrastructure and projects that create economic and social benefits in ANSB communities.</p> <p><b>IS 29</b></p>	<p>A full-time <b>African Nova Scotian and Black (ANSB) Community Food Coordinator</b> is required to build capacity towards an <b>ANSB food governance body</b>, deliver <b>food sovereignty projects (Kaja Planters &amp; Meal Prep Projects)</b> and advance related <b>JustFOOD recommendations</b>. The centering of ANSB approaches and perspectives will be critical to the success of the Halifax Food Council (HFC) as a governing body committed to racial equity, food justice, and community power.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop job description, hire Coordinator through OneNorthEnd.</li> <li>• Establish project timelines and partnerships</li> <li>• Order materials and launch programs</li> </ul>	<p>ANSB Coordinator, Advisory Group, and pilot projects through OneNorthEnd.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$110,352.05</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/25): \$105,491.05</b></p>

RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
<b>FOOD PRODUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
<p><b>Y1</b></p> <p><b>32.a.i.</b> Enable and fund the development of a Community Plots Pilot.</p> <p><b>32.a.ii.</b> Create and fund an Urban Agriculture Specialist staff position within the Municipality.</p> <p><b>32.a.vi.</b> Establish a Community Garden Grant Program</p> <p><b>IS 32</b></p>	<p>The proposed <b>Urban Agriculture Specialist (UAS)</b> will support the expansion of HRM's <b>Community Garden Program</b>, new <b>Community Garden Grants Program</b>, and the development of additional Municipally-led urban agriculture programs, including the <b>Community Plots Pilot</b>, altogether increasing HRM's knowledge base and capacity to provide opportunities for community food production.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize job description &amp; hire UAS</li> <li>• Identify sites, establish plots, create application process, and launch Community Plots Pilot</li> <li>• Develop TOR and supports for application and performance measurement</li> <li>• Launch and evaluate impact, need, and opportunities for Community Garden Grants</li> </ul>	<p>UAS role &amp; Food Program Funds; Community Plots Pilot; Community Gardens Grant Program</p> <p>Total Budget: \$184,400.00</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/25): \$184,400.00</b></p>
<p><b>IP</b></p> <p><b>33d.</b> Work with partner organizations to develop a backyard sharing program.</p> <p><b>ES 33</b></p>	<p>Throughout the development and implementation of the JustFOOD Action Plan, community members have identified a need and interest in greater access to low-barrier spaces for growing food. The <b>Backyard Sharing Program</b> will match residents that have available land with those who are seeking land for food production as well as guidance to establish a relationship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize Guidebook and template Agreements</li> <li>• Develop Platform, launch Program, and promote</li> <li>• Evaluate performance and explore opportunities for improvement</li> </ul>	<p>Platform of potential sites, matchmaking landholders &amp; gardeners, &amp; supports for relationship building.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p><i>Costs covered by food program funds, See Rec 32</i></p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</b></p>
<b>FOOD SUPPLY, PROCESSING, AND DISTRIBUTION RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
<p><b>IP</b></p> <p><b>37.</b> Assess the flow of food to and through HRM</p>	<p>The team continues to support research and seek opportunities to assess the flow of food into and throughout HRM. HRM and the HFFPA have collaborated with the <b>National Zero Waste Council (NZWC)</b> for the Circular Food Hubs Pilot (<b>see 51a for more details</b>). <a href="#">Data collection for the Pilot</a> has increased understanding of where food loss/waste is happening across the food system. Once the Pilot is complete, the food flow analysis will be incorporated into JustFOOD research and advancement of this recommendation.</p>		
<p><b>Y1</b></p> <p><b>38d.</b> Allow community food markets, food-distribution hubs, and stable community supported agriculture distribution sites in municipal spaces.</p>	<p>Work has begun to collaborate with HRM business units to create an <b>inventory of municipal spaces</b> that would be well suited for local food distribution. This work will include identification of opportunities, barriers, and relevant information about spaces that can be used to create a shareable dataset of potential sites for food distribution. This work will also be supported by the Food Asset Map (Rec. 6a)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage key municipal staff to further develop the inventory.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to incorporate in the HRM Food Asset Map or create platform to share inventory</li> </ul>	<p>Inventory of Municipal Sites for food distribution, retail, etc.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</b></p>

RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
<p><b>IP</b> <b>39a.</b> Continue to support the development of the Halifax Regional Food Hub and provincially supported community food networks, creating centralized infrastructure to store, process, market, and distribute local food to serve HRM.</p> <p><b>IS 39a</b></p>	<p>The HFPA is a founding member of the <b>Halifax Regional Food Hub Co-operative (Hub)</b>, working to establish centrally located infrastructure to connect food producers with wholesale buyers in the commercial, community, and institutional sectors. The Hub will offer facilities for aggregation, storage, online ordering, order fulfillment and delivery, and opportunities for co-marketing and promotion of local products. By supporting local producers, building local food infrastructure, and creating efficient channels for food distribution, the Hub will increase the Region's economic resiliency, food security, and food sovereignty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire a manager to lead the standing up of the Hub</li> <li>• Establish a facility for local food aggregation, storage, marketing, processing, and distribution</li> <li>• Form co-op networks of small to medium mainland Nova Scotia food producers and HRM buyers</li> <li>• Expand market access for HRM-based nonprofits, institutions, and commercial buyers</li> </ul>	<p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</b></p> <p><i>It is anticipated that a funding or in-kind contribution ask will come to HRM in Fiscal 2024/25 as part of the projected \$1.5 million budget for year 1 operations. HRM business parks have been identified as ideal locations for the Hub.</i></p>
<b>HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND RESILIENCE RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
<p><b>IP</b> <b>43a.</b> Address food insecurity's impact on community health... and advocate for income-based solutions.</p>	<p>The HFC and Municipal Food Team will continue to advocate across levels of government for income based solutions to household food insecurity, through consistently identifying income as the key determinant of household food insecurity. Collaboration and support will continue for <b>Basic Income Now</b> as they develop a municipal basic income advocacy toolkit. In June 2022, Halifax Regional Council passed a motion calling on the Government of Canada to implement a Guaranteed Livable Basic Income.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to advocate for the necessity of income based supports</li> <li>• Continue collaborating with all levels of government as well as local advocacy organizations such as Basic Income Now.</li> </ul>	<p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</b></p>



RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
<p><b>IP</b> 45. Develop an emergency food plan with funding and resources for emergency responses.</p> <p><b>IS 45b</b></p>	<p>Partnerships are crucial to emergency response strategies, as community-level groups are uniquely attuned to needs, are trusted by communities, and can provide rapid, targeted assistance, ensuring that resources and support are directed where most needed. Work to advance the <b>HRM Emergency Food Playbook</b> has focused on establishing community interest in and capacity to support emergency food responses, through the <b>Emergency Food Partners Survey</b>. This will support EMO's emergency response tools, including the ongoing Hazard, Risk, &amp; Vulnerability Assessment project and the SATURN (situational analysis and response) refresh.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase capacity and circulate Survey in additional communities and other potential partners</li> <li>• Negotiate Supplier Agreements with partners</li> <li>• Incorporate agreements and community partners into broader emergency response plans</li> </ul>	<p>Community Food &amp; Climate Specialist, Emergency Food Partners Survey, and Emergency Food Playbook.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$83,000.00 <i>(covered by surplus from current Contribution Agreement with EAC)</i></p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</b></p>
<p><b>IP</b> 45. Develop an emergency food program. Commit infrastructure for preparation and distribution of food supplies.</p> <p><b>IS 45b.ii.</b></p>	<p>The <b>Community Food Distribution Pilot</b> will maximize the <b>HRM Emergency Food Truck</b> to bring food into communities; distribute surplus food in partnership with Second Harvest; and support community food organizations in food acquisition and delivery. The new <b>Emergency Food Truck Coordinator</b> will use the Truck to support emergency responses, focusing community food distribution, preparation, and preservation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire Coordinator</li> <li>• Create Truck calendar and Agreements of Use</li> <li>• Launch and promote Pilot</li> <li>• Evaluate uptake and food rescue opportunities</li> <li>• Explore options for development of program</li> </ul>	<p>Truck Coordinator, Food Distribution Pilot, Second Harvest partnership, and Calendar</p> <p>Total Budget: \$63,381.00 <i>(accounted for in 2023/24 HRM Community Safety operational budget)</i></p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</b></p>
<p><b>IP</b> 47. Work with the Coalition for Healthy School Food and the Province to advocate for universal healthy school food programs.</p>	<p>The HFC will continue to sit on the <a href="#">Coalition for Healthy School Food Nova Scotia Advisory Committee</a> and Halifax Regional Council endorsed the Coalition's call for a universal, cost-shared, healthy school food program for Canada in MArch of 2022. A universal school food program would provide all students with access to a healthy breakfast and lunch during the school day. Current advocacy includes asking the federal government to provide \$1 billion over 5 years with an immediate investment of \$200 million in the 2024 budget and calling upon the Province to sign agreements as part of a pilot or readiness to implement phase.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support Coalition advocacy efforts.</li> </ul>	<p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</b></p>

RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
<b>FOOD WASTE RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
 <p><b>51.</b> Convene food system actors to assess and monitor food loss and waste reduction across the food value chain</p> <p><b>ES 51a</b></p>	<p>HRM has partnered with the National Zero Waste Council, <a href="#">Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad</a> (COIL), Halifax Food Policy Alliance, and the Halifax Partnership to advance the <a href="#">Circular Food Hubs: Mainland Nova Scotia</a> Pilot. This Pilot is exploring circular food solutions that reduce food waste/loss, contribute to shorter supply chains, circulate resources, and regenerate natural systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results and final reports from Challenge due February 2024.</li> <li>• Last step of Pilot will be development of a roadmap towards a circular food hub or solution for mainland Nova Scotia</li> </ul>	<p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</b></p>
 <p><b>54.</b> Promote recovery and redistribution of safe and nutritious foods</p> <p><b>IS 45b &amp; 45b.ii</b></p>	<p>This recommendation is supported by a new partnership with Canada’s largest food rescue charity Second Harvest, wherein Second Harvest will assist HRM to monitor and coordinate food supply and community demand in support of the Community Food Distribution Pilot and <b>Emergency Food Playbook</b>. Second Harvest will match quality surplus food with community food distribution partners, with the Food Truck Coordinator using the HRM Emergency Food Truck to bring this recovered food into communities. <b>See Recommendations 45b and 45b.ii for more details.</b></p>		
 <p>56b. Explore a vermiculture pilot project to provide a limited number of free worm composting bins to community members along with worms, bedding and education.</p> <p><b>IS 56b</b></p>	<p>The <b>Vermicomposting Pilot</b> will provide residents with access to free vermicomposting kits and associated educational opportunities to increase their capacity to compost year-round, both at home and in their communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with community organization(s) to promote the Pilot</li> <li>• Finalize Pilot details including number of kits and workshop dates, locations, and times.</li> <li>• Promote and offer workshops</li> <li>• Evaluate the Pilot and program viability</li> </ul>	<p>Vermicomposting kits &amp; workshops</p> <p>Total Budget: \$4,565.00 (<i>to be included in HRM Solid Waste’s 2024/25 budget</i>).</p> <p><b>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</b></p>

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES



**Recommendation 1: Establish and fund a Food Council (FC).** See aligned **Recommendations 1b.i, 2, 5, and 9d.**

**Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan:** The **Halifax Food Council (HFC)** will coordinate collective action for positive change; increase and center community participation in food system governance; support and fund community-based food initiatives; advise governments, institutions, and others; and guide and evaluate the implementation of the JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan.

**Project Description:** The **Halifax Food Council** is a collaborative food governance model that will replace and expand on the work of the Halifax Food Policy Alliance. The HFC will reside within a fledging organization (Ecology Action Centre) to reduce administrative burden and allow for the gradual exploration of legal incorporation. It will comprise an Advisory Circle responsible for overarching HFC governance and 2 FTE staff to support daily operations and mandate fulfillment. The HFC Terms of Reference will prioritize and increase community-level participation. Diverse representation will support collaborative, evidence-based decision making across the food system.

**Total Budget:** \$282,399.73

**Municipal 2024/25 Ask:** \$251,493.48

**Current Status:**

- Completed preliminary research into food council roles and governance
- Identified founding principles and roles
- Considered legal implications and selected governance model

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Hire and collaborate with consultant(s) to develop governance relationship, legal terms, and financial mechanisms between HFC and EAC
- Advance Advisory Circle Terms of Reference
- Formalize partnership between the HFC, EAC, and HRM
- Integrate (1) Indigenous and (2) ANSB food governance models
- Establish Advisory Circle and hire HFC staff

**Lead:** Halifax Food Council

**Partners:**

- Municipal Food Team & Legal Services
- Baxter Research Lab
- Ecology Action Centre
- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
- AKOMA
- One North End
- Nova Scotia Health

**Intended Impact:** The HFC will serve the following core functions:

- Oversee the **implementation and monitoring** of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*;
- Establish a **collaborative governance space** for food system actors to identify and pursue shared goals for the regional food system; and
- Hold and **distribute Community Food Grant funds** to those engaged in community based food initiatives that advance JustFOOD Halifax and other HFC & HRM priorities.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** HFC will:

- Prepare an annual report to Regional Council, including HFC's activities and performance, project outcomes and updates, priority JustFOOD recommendations for the upcoming year, and financial statements
- Publish an annual food system monitoring report & a 5-year comprehensive progress review for the *JustFOOD Action Plan*

**Recommendation 1b.i: Develop a sustainable funding stream** operated by the Food Council (FC). *See aligned Recommendations IS1.*

**Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan:** Community engagement demonstrated a significant gap in accessible and low-barrier funding for community-based food initiatives. The **Community Food Grants Program** is an independent, arms-length funding stream (administered by the HFC) to support community-based organizations and grassroots initiatives that advance and align with the JustFOOD vision of a healthy, just, & sustainable food system.

**Project Description:** An accessible and sustainably-funded annual **Community Food Grants Program** will support community-based groups to advance projects that reflect community needs and progress systems-level change. The Program will focus on grassroots efforts and equity-deserving communities, recognizing community groups as agents of positive change.

The HFC will administer the Program, which will be designed to reduce barriers to application and reporting. The Program will offer:

- Simplified application processes;
- Grant writing supports;
- Operations funding; and
- Program evaluation, capacity building, and knowledge sharing resources.

**Total Budget and Municipal Ask:** \$185,718.75

Additional contributions from other funders are anticipated once the Program is established.

**Current Status:**

- Completed research into best practices and scoped Program values and principles
- Explored potential of combining grants into one intake, two streams with FeedNS Innovation Lab

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Once HFC is established, develop eligibility criteria, priority objectives, and evaluation frameworks
- Launch and evaluate Program

**Lead:** HFC to administer, HRM to fund

**Partners:**

- Feed NS
- Community food actors
- Additional Funders

**Intended Impact:** The Program will:

- Increase food security, justice, and sovereignty across HRM
- Reduce barriers to application and prioritize underserved communities
- Increase accessibility of funding and (re) distribute power to communities
- Demonstrate value of low-barrier, flexible, community-based funding
- Build community capacity and resilience
- Offer training and assistance
- Promote sharing of learnings

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Recipients will report on activities and outcomes, through co-designed and supported evaluation processes. Impact and learnings from the Program will be shared through:

- Annual HFC reports to Regional Council;
- Updates on the [Virtual Community Food Hub](#); and
- Better understanding of community needs and opportunities

**Recommendation 5: Create a virtual community food hub.** See aligned Recommendations 1 and 6a.

**Advancement of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*:** The **Virtual Community Food Hub** is an online platform for sharing community food resources, funding opportunities, research, and food related activities in the Region. The Hub will be used to report on the progress of the JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan. It will be the home of the Halifax Food Council and a place to connect with other community food actors.

**Project Description:** The **Virtual Community Food Hub** will be the online home of the HFC. It will profile HFC activities and progress of the *JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan*. The Hub will expand on the work of the HFGA to provide resources, programs, and research that strengthen community food action and foster ongoing collaboration and collective impact. The Hub will promote research and dialogue to identify emerging issues, informing implementation and adaptation of *JustFOOD*.

**Total Budget:** \$1,389.98, included as part of the HFC Budget (IS 1).

**Current Status:**

- JustFOOD website (justfoodhalifax.ca) active for two years
- Quote received for elevation to virtual food hub

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Work with Web Designer to expand justfoodhalifax.ca into the Hub
- Develop the virtual home of the HFC and Community Food Grants Program (IS 1b.i)
- Set up tools for reporting on progress of JustFOOD (IS 9d)
- Update the Community Food Assessment Toolkit and incorporate/link to other resources such as event calendar, Food Asset Map, and food researcher profiles
- Develop website maintenance plan and protocol for update

**Lead:** Halifax Food Council

**Partners:**

- Web and graphic designer
- HRM Municipal Food Team
- Food system actors, including: food organizations, researchers, and community members

**Intended Impact:**

- Build trust and participation in HFC and aligned governance bodies such as the ANSB and Indigenous Advisories
- Make it easy to track the progress of *JustFOOD*
- Increase awareness of food-related events, programs, resources, and research in HRM
- Foster connections and build capacity for food action
- Provide resources that increase understanding and awareness of the food system
- Amplify collective action and advocacy for systems change

**Monitoring and Evaluation:**

- Annual updates and performance indicators evaluating JustFOOD progress,
- Reviews of content for relevance to HFC activities and emerging issues
- Analysis of website traffic and use of components like event calendars and research profiles
- Community surveys and outreach to gauge user experience and gather suggestions for improvement

**Recommendation 6a:** Develop the **HRM Food Asset Map**.

**Advancement of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*:** The **HRM Food Asset Map** is a visual, geographic database of food resources in the Halifax Region. The Map will be a communal resource to increase understanding of the regional food landscape; enable the tracking of changes over time; and support data collection and analysis to identify community vulnerabilities and strengths.

**Project Description:** The **HRM Food Asset Map** will provide open source data on food resources such as food organizations & services, outlets, agricultural land, licensed community kitchens, and advocacy agencies. The Map will be hosted on the Municipality's website (halifax.ca) and designed to provide food data to support researchers, policymakers, advocates, and community members.

Currently, the Map is in a preliminary development stage, with datasets on food outlets, community gardens, and community food services. Additional work is needed to refine the type and features of resources to be included; source and incorporate datasets; establish data maintenance protocols; and develop an easy to use public interface.

HRM will collaborate with the HFC, consultant(s), researchers, and community partners to advance the Map.

**Total Budget and Municipal Ask (2024/25):** \$25,300.00

**Current Status:**

- Developed preliminary data schema and incorporated data on outlets, services, and gardens
- Progressing relationship with CLARI, Dillon, and others to access data and best practices in food mapping

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Progress academic research partnership with CLARI
- Procure consultant to progress Food Asset Framework and ID datasets
- Acquire and refine datasets

- Establish protocols for data management
- Create public interface
- Launch, test, and refine the Map

**Lead:** Municipal Food Team and ICT

**Partners:**

- HFC
- Food Mapping Researchers (e.g., CLARI and Dillon)
- Data Stewards (e.g., 211 and FeedNS)
- Consultant(s)
- Community Partners (e.g., Community Health Boards and MFM)

**Intended Impact:** The Map will:

- Increase awareness of food resources;
- Create a baseline of shareable food resource data;
- Increase understanding of the regional food system and associated vulnerabilities and strengths;
- ID resources crucial for emergency food management; and
- ID assets important to equity deserving communities.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** The Map will be consistently updated through data management and feedback from map users and community partners. Monitoring and evaluation of the Map will support tracking of food system evolution, which will be reflected in JustFOOD Monitoring Framework updates (**IS 9d**).

**Recommendation 9d:** Use key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate Plan progress. *See aligned recommendations IS 1, 5, 6a, 17, 32a.i, 45b, and 45b.ii.*

**Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan:** The *JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan* requires a **robust Monitoring Framework** to evaluate progress and impact over time, as well as to inform revisions and strategic adjustments. The proposed Monitoring Framework establishes high quality, interpretable, and useful indicators that can be used to assess the food system, report on JustFOOD Halifax progress, inform decisions, and catalyze action.

**Project Description:** The **JustFOOD Monitoring Framework** will consist of a set of indicators that will be reviewed annually by the HFC to gauge the state of the regional food system, measure *JustFOOD Action Plan* progress, and track food system action or changes. The indicators are adapted from the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, a well-adopted framework to support cities across the globe in tackling food issues. HRM became a signatory to the Milan Pact in 2023.

The initial JustFOOD Monitoring Framework establishes **29 food system indicators selected for effective measurement of JustFOOD progress and evaluation of the regional food system**. Indicators have been selected based on the availability of data and long term monitoring capacity. Data collection and sharing protocols will need to be developed for each indicator, increasing sustainability of collection. Open data will serve as a resource to the broader community.

Data collection, analysis, and sharing will require significant coordination between government and non-government actors across the food system.

**Total Budget:** No additional budget ask

**Current Status:**

- Identified criteria for priority indicators and selected 29 initial indicators

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Develop data collection, analysis, and sharing plans
- Develop reporting plans to communicate key findings and changes over time

**Lead:** Halifax Food Council

**Partners:**

- HRM Food Team and IT
- NS Federation of Agriculture
- Farmers Markets Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia Health
- United Way
- Mobile Food Market

**Intended Impact:**

- Evaluate progress and impact of JustFOOD over time
- Assess and report on food system change
- Build capacity for food systems planning at municipal level and inform HRM KPIs
- Strengthen partnerships and knowledge transfer through data collection, analysis, and sharing

**Monitoring and Evaluation:**

- Annual review of indicators and regular updates on JustFOOD progress
- Ongoing review and refinement of the monitoring framework to ensure relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with priorities



**Recommendation 11: Develop programs and resources that address the rising cost of food** in collaboration with the Province, academic institutions, and other partners. *See aligned JustFOOD Recommendation 14.*

**Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan:** The Feed Nova Scotia Innovation and Learning Lab is progressing additional *JustFOOD Action Plan* recommendations, including the advancement of a **Social Supermarket Pilot & Rural Food Access Pilot**, both of which will promote affordable and dignified access to food. This work centres community voices in the exploration, design, and implementation of initiatives that increase food access.

**Project Description:** The JustFOOD team is partnering with FeedNS's Innovation and Learning Lab and other community food partners to advance recommendations from the *JustFOOD Action Plan*. Two pilot projects, the **Rural Food Access and Social Supermarket Pilots**, are being designed to increase dignified and affordable food access in two communities within HRM. Both projects are in the design stage.

A social supermarket is a community centered approach to selling food in a way that is affordable, offers choice, and maintains dignity. The Pilot will be designed with the primary intention to increase food access (rather than generating profits). The Rural Food Access Pilot will re-imagine what food access could look like in communities that are underserved by traditional food outlets.

**Total Budget:** No ask, the budgets for both Pilots will be determined through the design process, with FeedNS committing up to \$170,000 to support implementation.

**Current Status:**

- Design teams established
- Planning for minimum viable version for both Pilots underway

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Conduct community engagement for both Pilots
- Establish partnerships with food and community organizations
- Implement and evaluate Pilots

**Lead:** FeedNS Innovation and Learning Lab

**Partners:**

- Halifax Food Council
- Municipal Food Team
- Community-based organizations that align with pilot community and project scope

**Intended Impact:** The Pilots are intended to achieve the following:

- Increase dignified and affordable food access;
- Increase first voice, community-level participation in food systems work;
- Leverage existing resources and assets; and
- Develop an understanding of project feasibility, such as how Pilots can be sustained, expanded, or replicated in the long term.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** FeedNS's Lab, in collaboration with the Pilot design teams, will evaluate components and viability of each of the Pilots to determine:

- Progress in furthering the objectives of each respective Pilot
- Community perspectives and feedback
- Insight into sustainability of the projects, and potential for replication in other communities

**Recommendation 12: Promote fair and decent employment for all**, including fair economic relations, fair wages, and improved labour conditions within the food and agriculture sector.

**Recommendation 12e:** Collaborate with libraries, schools, community centres, and faith based-organizations to **provide easily accessible social services** (e.g., literacy services, legal services, resource fairs) to migrant workers in agriculture.

**Recommendation 12e.i: Develop multiple-language information packages to share with workers** upon arrival in Nova Scotia that detail existing public services and how to access them.

**Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan:** No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia (NOII-NS) is a leader in outreach, public education, and advocacy for migrant workers in NS. While these workers are vital to our agriculture and food service industries, they are also one of the most food insecure, overworked, underpaid, vulnerable, and overlooked groups in our society. By providing support for NOII-NS's work, JustFOOD is promoting the rights and wellbeing of migrant workers in HRM, recognizing the value these workers bring to our food system.

**Project Description:** NOII-NS were key advisers for JustFOOD Part A recommendations, developed in consultation with migrant workers across Nova Scotia. NOII-NS has designed two Pilots to reduce the barriers workers face in accessing critical services and resources, easing their transition into working and living in our Region:

- **English for Migrant Workers (EMW) Pilot:** Creation and delivery of an English language course for migrant workers, with lessons that focus on workplace skills and knowledge, workers' rights, and local culture.
- **Welcome Bags Pilot:** Creation and distribution of packages (welcome bags) to migrant workers upon arrival in HRM. Bags will be designed to increase workers' awareness of rights and responsibilities, connect workers to support services, and provide workers with practical items for emergencies and personal hygiene

**Total Budget and Municipal Ask:** \$42,032.90

**Current Status:**

- Pilot scope and scale established
- Conversations Initiated with potential partners to support delivery of Pilots

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Prepare materials and recruit staff
- Engage with workers in HRM on both Pilots
- Deliver and evaluate Pilots

**Lead:** No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia

**Partners:**

- Halifax Food Council
- ESL experts
- Community advocacy agencies

**Intended Impact:**

- Improve workers' language skills
- Increase workers' awareness of their rights and responsibilities
- Connect workers to relevant services and community resources
- Promote rights and wellbeing of workers in HRM

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** NOII-NS will measure participation in the Pilots, growth in language skills, and improved ability to access services and connect to community.

The Pilots will be continually evaluated to determine what works, what could be updated, and potential for the establishment of a long-term program.

**Recommendation 17:** Use Municipal facilities and assets to offer food programs, grow food, and support public food infrastructure. See *aligned recommendations 31b, 32a.ii and 32a.vi.*

**Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan:** The **Community Orchard Pilot** supports the integration and maximization of Municipal assets for food demonstration, production, access, and literacy by planting fruit/nut trees on centrally located, well-accessed Municipal land. The Pilot will build community and municipal capacity for fruit/nut production by improving growing infrastructure, promoting knowledge sharing, and hosting specialized training opportunities.

**Project Description:** A community orchard is a collection of fruit and/or nut trees that are used or shared by communities and grown in publicly accessible areas. The **Community Orchard Pilot** is an opportunity for HRM to expand and revitalize the Leighton Dillman Community Orchard, increase access to and awareness of fruit/nut trees, and grow community capacity for fruit/nut tree stewardship.

The new Urban Agriculture Specialist will collaborate with Horticulture staff to establish and maintain the Orchard. Residents will be supported to access fresh produce and engage in new ways of growing food. Through interpretive signage, residents will learn about growing fruit/nut trees. Specialized training will increase capacity of Municipal staff and community partners to grow trees across the Region.

**Municipal Ask:** \$8,840.00

**Current Status:**

- Established partnership with Horticulture for care and maintenance of trees
- Determined scope, scale, and location for Pilot
- Connected with experts for training

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Organize and host training on planting and caring for trees
- Procure, prep site, and plant trees
- Develop and execute maintenance plan
- Install interpretive signage
- Evaluate impact and explore expansion to other site(s)

**Lead:** Municipal Food Team

**Partners:**

- HRM Horticulture
- Community members

**Intended Impact:** The Community Orchard Pilot project will integrate and maximize Municipal assets for food demonstration, production, and distribution. Fruit/nuts may be consumed by community members and used in food literacy programming.

Training will provide Horticulture and other Municipal staff with knowledge on the care and maintenance of trees, increasing capacity for future community orchards and fruit/nut growing at home and elsewhere.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Pilot evaluation will include monitoring of the:

- Number of fruit/nut trees planted,
- Growth and health of the trees,
- Effort and impact of maintenance, and
- Opportunities for expansion to a program.

The Pilot will also evaluate the impact of tree maintenance training(s) through metrics such as the number of staff trained and attendees' self-identified capacity for fruit/nut tree growing.

A monitoring and evaluation plan for community use will be developed when trees reach fruit bearing age.



**Recommendation 23e and 22:** Fund a **full-time food coordinator staff position** at the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC) and establish and fund an **Indigenous food-governance model**. *See aligned recommendations 1c and 2.*

**Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan:** The creation of an **Indigenous Food Coordinator role** and the advancement of an **Indigenous food governance body** will support Indigenous food sovereignty and justice efforts across the Region. The centering of Indigenous approaches and perspectives will be critical to the success of the Halifax Food Council (HFC) as a governing body committed to racial equity, food justice, and community power.

**Project Description:** This Strategy advances the establishment of a **full time Food Coordinator position** at the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC). The Coordinator will serve as a member of the HFC; work with the HFC to promote collaboration and mutual support between Indigenous and settler communities; work with the Indigenous Working Group to explore and establish an Indigenous food governance body; advocate for actions and changes that promote Indigenous food justice and sovereignty; and advance relevant JustFOOD recommendations.

**Total Budget:** \$80,080

**Municipal 2024/25 Ask:** \$52,584

**Current Status:**

- MNFC Working Group struck
- Coordinator job description developed, in consultation with the MNFC Working Group

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Hire the Coordinator
- Develop mechanisms to support strong collaboration and mutual support between Indigenous Coordinator, Working Group, and HFC
- Identify Year 1 priority projects and JustFOOD recommendations for Coordinator to advance
- Explore and test Indigenous food governance models, with the support of a community-led working group

**Lead:** Indigenous Food Coordinator and Indigenous Community Working Group

**Partners:**

- HFC & Municipal Food Team
- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
- Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre
- Feed Nova Scotia

**Intended Impact:** The Coordinator and governance model will:

- Advance Indigenous food sovereignty, justice, and security efforts across the Region;
- Promote collaboration between Indigenous and settler communities and organizations;
- Increase community power and center racial equity in food system governance; and
- Strengthen the HFC through centering Indigenous approaches and perspectives.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:**

- Coordinator will report to MNFC Program Manager; performance will be evaluated internally to MNFC
- Coordinator will prepare annual reports to the HFC detailing activities undertaken, outlining project metrics, and evaluating the impact of the provided funding
- HFC will include updates on this work in its annual report to Halifax Regional Council

**Recommendation 29:** Develop community infrastructure and projects that **create economic and social benefits** in ANSB communities.

**Recommendation 29b:** Support the development of an **ANS-led community food hub**. *See aligned recommendations 1c, 2, and 26.*

**Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan:** A full-time **African Nova Scotian and Black (ANSB) Community Food Coordinator** is required to build capacity towards an **ANSB food governance body**, deliver **Black food sovereignty projects**, and advance related JustFOOD Halifax recommendations. The centering of ANSB approaches and perspectives will be critical to the success of the Halifax Food Council (HFC) as a governing body committed to racial equity, food justice, and community power.

**Project Description:** The ANSB Community Food Coordinator will lead ANSB food projects, build capacity for food governance, and represent the ANSB community on the HFC Advisory Circle. The Coordinator will liaise with the Municipal Food Team and HFC staff, establishing mechanisms for collaboration and mutual support. The Coordinator will be hosted by ONE North End (ONE), with guidance from the ANSB Working Group. In Year 1, the Coordinator will deliver two community identified projects: the (1) Caja Planter Box Project and (2) ANSB Meal Prep Program. The Coordinator will also begin to explore the creation of a Black Community Food Centre.

**Total Budget:** \$110,352.05

**Municipal Ask (2024/25):** \$105,491.05

**Current Status:**

- Community engagement led by the ANSB Working Group identified 2 priority projects
- Initial partnerships to support project delivery are being explored

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Develop job description, hire for role
- Establish project timelines and partnerships
- Order materials and launch programs

**Lead:** ANSB Sovereignty Working Group

**Partners:**

- HFC & Municipal Food Team
- ONE North End
- The North Grove
- NSCC Culinary Arts (Akerley)
- Akoma
- Delmore Buddy Daye Institute

**Intended Impact:**

- The Caja Planter Box Project will increase ANSB food sovereignty by making gardening more accessible and attainable
- The ANSB Meal Prep Program will provide community members with opportunities to create healthy, afrocentric meals; engage in communal dinners; and learn more about Black food sovereignty

Long-term goals are to build capacity to create an ANSB food governance body, and advance the development of a Black Community Food Centre.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:**

- Coordinator will report to ONE Senior Management, with internal evaluation
- Coordinator will report annually to HFC, detailing activities, project metrics, and impact of the funding
- HFC will include updates on this work in its annual report to Halifax Regional Council

**Recommendation 32.a.i:** Enable and fund the development of a **Community Plots Pilot**.

**Recommendation 32.a.ii:** Create and fund an **Urban Agriculture Specialist staff position** within the Municipality. See aligned Recommendations **17** and **56b**.

**Recommendation 32.a.vi:** Develop a **Community Garden Grant Program** funding stream.

**Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan:** The proposed **Urban Agriculture Specialist** (UAS) will support the expansion of HRM’s [Community Garden Program](#), new **Community Garden Grants Program**, and the development of additional Municipally-led urban agriculture programs, including the **Community Plots Pilot**, thereby increasing HRM’s knowledge base and capacity to provide opportunities for community food production.

**Project Description:** The [Urban Agriculture Specialist](#) (UAS) will develop and oversee urban food production programs that increase access to land and maximize municipal assets. The UAS will manage the [Community Plots Pilot](#), which will increase access to growing space through a Municipally-run, low or no-cost plot rental program. The UAS will also advance the [Community Orchard Pilot](#), in partnership with Horticulture. In collaboration with Community Developers, the UAS will administer the [Community Garden Program](#) and develop the [Community Garden Grant Program](#) to increase support for new and existing community gardens on municipal land to acquire resources and infrastructure, maintain/expand gardens, and conduct accessibility audits.

**Total Budget / Municipal Ask (2024/25):** \$184,400

UAS & program funds= \$103,000

Community Plots Pilot= \$41,400

Community Garden Grants= \$40,000

**Current Status:**

- Developed draft UAS job description
- Preliminary consultation conducted for the Community Plots Pilot and Community Garden Grant Program

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Finalize job description & hire UAS
- Identify sites, establish plots, create application process, and launch Community Plots Pilot

- Strike Review Team; develop TOR and supports for application & performance measurement; launch; and evaluate impact, need, and appropriate future budget for the Community Garden Grants Program

**Lead:** Municipal Food Team

**Partners:**

- Parks and Recreation
- Solid Waste
- HalifACT

**Intended Impact:** The new UAS will increase capacity of the Municipality to develop and enhance food production initiatives and increase urban agriculture expertise of the Municipal Food Team. Initiatives will prioritize reducing barriers to participation, strengthening the regional food system, and promoting community food access and sovereignty. Initiatives will prioritize communities most vulnerable to food insecurity and with limited access to growing space.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:**

Initiatives will be assessed through:

- Community feedback to gauge accessibility, impact, and opportunities
- Metrics such as number of initiatives, community uptake, volume of harvest, area of growing space, and impact of grants

Ongoing evaluation of initiatives will occur to measure impact and consider feasibility for longer term programs.

**Recommendation 33d:** Work with partner organizations to develop a **backyard-sharing program**.

**Advancement of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*:** Throughout community engagement for JustFOOD Halifax, community members identified a need for greater access to low-barrier spaces for growing food. The **Backyard Sharing Program** will match residents that have available land with those who are seeking land for food production. The Program will provide a guidebook and template agreement to support users to establish this relationship on their own.

**Project Description:** The **Backyard Sharing Program**

will connect community members that have land suitable for gardening with community members who are seeking land for growing, tending, and harvesting food. The Program will identify potential sites or “backyards”, connect interested gardeners with interested landholders, and offer tools to support the two parties to enter into an agreement.

The Program will be hosted on the Municipality’s website, with the Municipal Food Team supporting matchmaking and capacity building. The landholder and gardener will independently negotiate and be responsible for their relationship and the shared use of land. The HFC, community partner, and HRM Corporate Communications networks will be used to promote the Program.

**Total Budget:** No ask; Municipal Food Team budget will cover costs, as needed

**Current Status:**

- Template land sharing guide and sample land agreement drafted by Baxter Research Lab

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Finalize Guide and Agreements
- Develop Platform, launch Program, and promote widely
- Evaluate performance and explore opportunities for improvement for improvement

**Lead:** Municipal Food Team and IT

**Partners:**

- HRM Corporate Communications
- Baxter Research Group

- Halifax Food Council
- Community food partners

**Intended Impact:** The Program is intended to:

- Increase access to and awareness of available growing spaces in HRM;
- Promote relationship building and connections between community members;
- Normalize food production and promote the sharing of resources;
- Build community capacity for urban food production and knowledge sharing;
- Increase community food access; and
- Promote opportunities for the growing of culturally relevant crops and traditional or culturally-specific farming practices.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** The Program will be assessed by:

- Tracking engagement (monitoring use of matchmaking tools, visits to the site, and other metrics of Program participation); and
- Collecting stories/feedback from Program participants on experiences, lessons learned, usefulness of tools, and suggestions for improvement.

The Program will be continually assessed to gauge public awareness and impact, as well as to explore opportunities for promotion and expansion.

**Recommendation 39:** Improve and expand infrastructure that links buyers to sellers. This will build social cohesion and trust, support cultural exchange, and ensure sustainable livelihoods.

**Recommendation 39a:** Continue to **support the development of the Halifax Regional Food Hub** and provincially supported community food networks, creating centralized infrastructure to store, process, market, and distribute local food to serve HRM.

**Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan:** The **Halifax Regional Food Hub** seeks to build and strengthen Nova Scotia's regional food system by connecting local producers throughout mainland Nova Scotia to wholesale buyers.

**Project Description:** [The Halifax Regional Food Hub Co-operative \(Hub\)](#) will connect primary and secondary food producers located throughout mainland Nova Scotia with HRM-based wholesale buyers in the commercial, community, and institutional sectors. The Hub will offer facilities for aggregation, storage, online ordering, order fulfillment and delivery, and opportunities for co-marketing and promotion of local products.

**Total Budget / Municipal Ask (2024/25):** N/A. It is anticipated that a funding or in-kind contribution ask will come to HRM in Fiscal 2024/25 as part of the projected \$1.5 million budget for year 1 operations. HRM business parks have been identified as a suitable location.

**Current Status:** [Significant research and engagement have established a "minimal viable" Hub, governance model, operation principles, market analysis, and implementation plan.](#)

Recruitment is underway for a general manager, who will expand the co-op and implement the business plan. Funding has been secured to support business planning and human resources. Alternative funding sources continue to be explored for the implementation of the business plan and standing up of the Hub.

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Hire a manager to lead the standing up of the Hub
- Establish a facility for local food aggregation, storage, marketing, processing, and distribution
- Form co-op networks of small to medium mainland Nova Scotia food producers, boosting food sovereignty

- Create a co-op network of HRM buyers (e.g., nonprofits, institutions, and commercial buyers)
- Expand market access for HRM-based nonprofits, institutions, and commercial buyers

**Lead:** Halifax Food Council Team and Municipal Food Team

**Founding Partners and Co-op Members:**

- Feed Nova Scotia
- Halifax Food Policy Alliance
- Mobile Food Market
- Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia
- Nourish Nova Scotia
- Novalea Kitchen and Market
- Consultants: Flourish Community Development Co-op

**Intended Impact:** JustFOOD and community engagement for the Hub identified significant challenges in distribution and access to local food. By supporting local producers, building local food infrastructure, and creating efficient channels for food distribution, the Halifax Regional Food Hub will increase Nova Scotia's economic resiliency, food security, and food sovereignty.



**Recommendation 45b: Develop a Climate Emergency Food Program.** See aligned recommendation 45b.ii.

**Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan:** Partnerships are crucial to emergency response strategies, as community-level groups are uniquely attuned to needs, have trusting relationships with community members, and can provide rapid, targeted assistance, ensuring that resources and support are directed where most needed. Work to advance the **HRM Emergency Food Playbook** has focused on establishing community interest in and capacity to support emergency food responses.

**Project Description:** EMO is developing and updating tools to support the creation of the **HRM Emergency Food Playbook**, which will detail scenario-specific emergency food responses, identify “triggers” for these responses, and outline how emergency responders, the community, and other partners will be involved. EMO tools include the HRVA (identify critical food infrastructure and community risks & vulnerabilities) and SATURN (for situational analysis and response) projects.

JustFOOD has supported this work through relationship-building with potential community-based emergency food partners (EFPs). This has clarified EFPs’ interest, resources, roles, and potential for emergency food responses. A preliminary **Emergency Food Partners Survey** was developed to connect with key community food partners in six communities with high rates of food insecurity and increased vulnerability to events. The resulting EFP profiles demonstrate high interest in partnering with HRM to support emergency responses. Supplier Agreements will be developed to advance these relationships. The Survey will be expanded to other organizations and communities to gauge interest in emergency food partnerships.

**Total Budget:** \$83,000 for the Community Food & Climate Specialist role.

**Municipal 2024/25 Ask:** \$0, covered under current Contribution Agreement with EAC.

**Current Status:**

- Developed and launched Survey
- Completed and confirmed interest with 11 EFPs

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Increase capacity and circulate Survey in additional communities
- Negotiate Supplier Agreements with EFPs
- Incorporate agreements and community partners into broader emergency response plans

**Lead:** EMO & Municipal Food Team

**Partners:**

- E&CC (HalifACT), Legal Services
- Emergency food partners (local, regional, nonprofit, and commercial)

**Intended Impact:**

- Increase understanding of EFPs’ capacity to lead community-based emergency food responses
- Formalize roles, responsibilities, and expectations through Supplier Agreements
- Integrate community partners into Municipal emergency planning and responses s.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:**

- Track the number of Surveys and profiles completed
- Track number of Supplier Agreements
- Measure role and impact of EFPs during an event
- Track development of the Playbook and inclusion of EFPs in emergency responses

**Recommendation 45b.ii: Develop an emergency food program.** See aligned recommendation 45b.

**Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan:** The **Halifax Food Distribution Pilot** will maximize use of the HRM Emergency Food Truck to bring food into communities; distribute surplus food; and support community food organizations in food acquisition and delivery.

**Project Description:** In the **Halifax Food Distribution Pilot**, the new Emergency Food Truck Coordinator will use the HRM Emergency Food Truck to support Municipal emergency responses focused on community food distribution, preparation, and prevention of loss. In non-emergency times, the Coordinator will use the Truck to supply community-based partners with food, through the partnership with **Second Harvest** (SH), a nonprofit food rescue organization. The Coordinator will also provide partners with access to the Truck to support their programs. Community food distribution activities will strengthen emergency response due to relationships built and community knowledge gained, as well as Coordinators familiarity with Truck operations.

The agreement with SH provides access to their food rescue app to coordinate food supply and demand in the Region. The Truck will move food from suppliers to community partners in a timely manner, reducing food waste/loss and freeing up partners' time for program delivery.

**Total Budget:** \$63,381.00, no ask as covered by existing budgets

**Current Status:**

- Refrigerated Truck is road ready
- Agreement made with SH and community-level partners engaged
- Truck Coordinator position approved, hiring underway

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Hire Coordinator
- Update foodrescue.ca to include Truck as option
- Create Truck calendar and Agreements of Use
- Launch and promote Pilot

- Evaluate uptake and food rescue opportunities
- Explore options for development of long term program

**Lead:** Municipal Food Team and EMO

**Partners:**

- Second Harvest
- HRM Environment and Climate Change (HalifACT)
- Community Food Organizations

**Intended Impact:** The Pilot is intended to:

- Support emergency food distribution, preparation, and loss prevention;
- Strengthen relationships with community actors, and grow mutual capacity for food distribution and emergency food responses. .

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** During Emergencies, EMO will track:

- Food and supplies distributed/preserved
- Communities served and ways in which the Truck supported responses

For Community Food Distribution, the Coordinator will work with SH to track:

- Quantity and value of food rescued
- Communities and organizations served

The Pilot will be evaluated with a mind to evolving community needs, towards the establishment of a permanent program

**Recommendation 51: Convene food system actors to assess and monitor food loss and waste reduction** across the food value chain.

**Recommendation 51a:** In collaboration with partners such as the National Zero Waste Council, Divert Nova Scotia, Second Harvest, and Halifax Solid Waste Resources, identify gaps and develop better systems for the collection of food-waste data to (1) establish a baseline measure of food waste and (2) identify opportunities to address or prevent food waste.

**Recommendation 51b:** Participate in regional and national conversations on food waste and circular economy.

**Advancement of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*:** HRM has partnered with the National Zero Waste Council, [Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad](#) (COIL), Halifax Food Policy Alliance, and the Halifax Partnership to advance the [Circular Food Hubs: Mainland Nova Scotia](#) Pilot. This Pilot is **exploring circular food solutions that reduce food waste/loss**, contribute to shorter supply chains, circulate resources, and regenerate natural systems.

**Project Description:** The **Circular Food Hubs Pilot** includes peer-to-peer learning through workshops, data collection and strategic opportunity assessment, and the piloting and testing of solutions that divert, reuse, and upcycle food loss/waste resources across the food value chain.

Data collection for the Pilot has increased understanding of where food loss/waste is happening across the food system. In addition to providing guidance and funding for testing solutions, the Pilot is building collective capacity for food loss/waste prevention by connecting participants with local leaders in food waste prevention and circularity, as well as those leading similar innovations elsewhere in Canada.

**Budget:** No ask. Pilot is partner funded.

**Current Status:**

- Workshop: [Supporting Circular Food Systems hosted May 2023](#), created a shared vision for circular food hubs in Nova Scotia
- Workshop: [From Vision to Action, July 2023](#), presented food flow analysis and recommended interventions
- Currently the Pilot is in the testing phase of the project. The [Circular Food Solution Challenge](#) closed November 2023. Grants are being awarded and lessons learned will be shared

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Results and final reports from Challenge due February 2024
- Explore opportunities to advance circular food solutions through collaborations such as the Challenge Roadmap, Regional Food Hub, Virtual Food Hub and other initiatives

**Lead:** HRM Solid Waste Resources and National Zero Waste Council

**Partners:**

- Halifax Food Policy Alliance
- Halifax Partnership
- COIL
- Local businesses and organizations

**Intended Impact:**

- Increase understanding of food waste/loss points across the food system
- Collective testing of solutions and ideas towards a more circular local food system
- Reduction in food loss/waste
- Advance a place-based circular hub for our Region



**Recommendation 56.b: Explore a vermiculture pilot project** to provide a limited number of free worm composting bins to community members along with worms, bedding, and education.

**Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan:** The **Vermicomposting Pilot** will provide residents with access to free vermicomposting kits and associated educational opportunities to increase their capacity to compost year-round, both at home and in their communities.

**Project Description:** Vermicomposting is a practical way to participate in year-round household composting. It uses earthworms housed in closed containers to quickly break down household food waste into high-quality, nutrient rich soil.

The Pilot will provide opportunities for community members to participate in vermicomposting workshops and receive limited vermicomposting kits to support year-round composting at home.

Benefits of household and community-level composting include: reduced food waste sent to compost facilities or landfills, decreased costs of transporting organic waste to composting facilities, and production of compost that can be used by the community to support the growing of food.

**Total Budget:** \$4,565.00 No ask, to be included in HRM Solid Waste's 2024/25 Budget

**Current Status:**

- Confirmed partnership with and commitments from HRM Solid Waste
- Established scope and scale of Pilot
- Formulated and approved the budget

**Next Steps for 2024/2025:**

- Partner with community organization(s) to promote the Pilot
- Finalize Pilot details including number of kits and workshop dates, locations, and times

- Order supplies and assemble kits
- Prepare knowledge products and training materials
- Promote workshops
- Offer workshops
- Evaluate the Pilot and consider potential for development of a program

**Lead:** HRM Solid Waste Resources

**Partners:**

- Municipal Food Team
- HFC and Community organizations

**Intended Impact:** The intended impact is to increase the capacity of residents to engage in composting in their homes and neighborhoods by providing the knowledge and tools necessary to engage in vermicomposting year-round. The Pilot will also leverage existing Municipal programs to advance JustFOOD recommendations.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Evaluation will occur throughout the Pilot and will inform future workshops and program development. It will include metrics such as number of kits distributed, number of participants at workshops, participant feedback, and new partnerships developed.

# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES



# RECOMMENDATION 1.

## Halifax Food Council



- 1. Establish and fund a Food Council** (HFC) to coordinate collective action for positive change; support regional food initiatives; advise governments, institutions, and others; and guide and evaluate the implementation of the JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan.

### *Aligned Recommendations:*

- 1a.** Develop a governance structure that best supports the Council in delivering an effective mandate, including terms of reference and responsibilities, reporting structures, staffing, and other administrative needs.
- 1b.** Resource the Council through secure funding from government and other sources, in-kind support, and other contributions to ensure an adequate budget for implementing the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.
  - 1b.i.** Develop a sustainable funding stream operated by the Council to provide financial support for community-based initiatives that address community food access and the health of the local food system.
- 1c.** Centre racial equity and increase community power in food governance and ensure that the Council reflects diverse perspectives and provides opportunities for communities to lead and influence food action and system change in our food system towards increased food justice and food sovereignty.

## BACKGROUND

Effective food systems governance requires coordinated response and decision-making processes between and among levels and orders of government (federal, provincial, local, and Indigenous), institutions, and community organizations, as well as the active engagement of individuals.

Increasingly, municipalities are being called on to address food system transformation and take on more prominent roles in food systems governance. While municipal governments can face barriers in addressing food system challenges, including limited jurisdiction over levers like income supports, collaborative governance structures are emerging as tools to cut across conventional jurisdictions, organizational lines, public-private-civic spheres, and other boundaries. These collaborative governance models convene networks of governmental and non-governmental members, functioning to create and deliver public goods across the food system.

The success of collaborative governance models and food policy councils has been closely tied to the depth and breadth of municipal support and involvement.

“Fundamentally important for effective municipal food policy development is a strong attachment to the municipal government, active support from municipal staff, partnership between elected and unelected officials around a common purpose and mission, and food systems thinking”.

#### —2014 MUNICIPAL FOOD POLICY ENTREPRENEURS

As an official signatory to the [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact](#), HRM is part of the international movement recognizing that food is central to a well functioning municipality. This implementation strategy details the **establishment of the Halifax Food Council (FC)**, a collaborative governance model that is intended to replace the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA). An official, resourced HFC is a strong tool to support HRM and other leaders’ commitments to collaborative food systems change through a mix of municipal policies, programs, civil-society interventions, and relationship building with actors across the food system.

Since Regional Council’s endorsement of the co-development of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region* in 2019 and adoption of Part A in 2023, HRM has taken leadership in bringing partners together across the food system. As COVID challenged the capacity of partners to participate in the work, HRM consistently increased its proportion of funding and support, recognizing the need for core funding and support to advance the implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* and build momentum. This strategy recommends that HRM **provide reliable funding for core operations**. When the HFC is established, additional support to expand its role and operations will come from other funders and partners that are brought to the table.

**This Strategy has been written in consultation with HRM Legal.**

## INTENDED IMPACT

Food systems connect a multitude of relationships and activities across sectors, governments, organizations, communities, and institutions. A collaborative approach to food system governance recognizes that no singular government or actor can adequately address food issues and instead uses decentralized and localized processes to foster relationships across the food system.

The Halifax Food Council (HFC) is a collaborative governance model that is intended to replace the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA), as the scope and responsibilities of the HFC exceed the capacity of the informal HFPA. Part A commits to formalizing the governance body and increasing community voice and power on the new HFC. As the successor to the HFPA, the HFC will continue to act in partnership with government, institutions, food system actors, and community members, increasing collective impact across the food system.

The HFC is intended to serve three core functions:

- **Oversee the implementation and monitoring** of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*;
- **Establish a collaborative governance space** for food system actors to identify and pursue shared goals for the regional food system; and

- **Hold and distribute grant funds** to organizations or individuals engaged in food system initiatives pursuant to the Action Plan and other policy initiatives of the HFC and the Municipality.

Two full time staff will be hired to support the HFC to carry out its core functions. In collaboration with the wider HFC and HRM Food Team, core Year One responsibilities of HFC staff will include:

- Stand up and continue to **support the Halifax Food Council Advisory Circle**;
- Recruit members, funders, and other partners needed to increase the impact, first voice representation, and relevance of the HFC;
- Oversee the **implementation of Part B**;
- Publish an annual **Food System Monitoring Report** to evaluate the progress and impact of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* over time and provide a basis for Plan revisions or strategic adjustments to Plan implementation (**see IS 9d**);
- Work with the Municipal food team, HFC, and community partners to **identify priority JustFOOD recommendations** for future years;
- Develop and administer the **Community Food Grants**, a sustainable funding stream to provide financial support for community-based initiatives that address community food access and the health of the local food system (**see IS 1b.i**);
- Support relevant **partner-led projects** such as Feed Nova Scotia’s “Rural Food Delivery Pilot” and “Social Supermarket Pilot Project”;
- Act in an **advisory capacity** to governments, institutions, and food system actors;
- Ensure **integration of food system governance models** (e.g., Indigenous and African Nova Scotian models) with HFC, centering **racial equity** and increasing **community power** in food governance (**see 1c and IS 2**);
- Support the advancement of the **Virtual Community Food Hub** (**see IS 5**);
- Advise HRM on the progression of the **HRM Food Asset Map**, and provide appropriate linkage to the Virtual Community Food Hub (**see IS 6a**); and
- Hold and expand the HFC’s role in **convening conversations and making connections around food** through the Virtual Community Food Hub, ongoing **engagement opportunities**, supporting community capacity building, and developing **knowledge products** to support food system transformation.

## FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The following foundational criteria, outlined in [Building Collaboration: Governance in Halifax’s Regional Food System](#), will guide the establishment and work of the HFC:

- **Supporting Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility:** for decision-making about the food system to be legitimate, equitable, and fair, the HFC must enable (and be accountable to) the active participation of communities and community members with a range of community connections, lived experiences, and ways of knowing.



- **Responding to Inequities in Power:** Because asymmetrical power relations will inevitably exist between members (and therefore between their communities or constituencies), the HFC must encourage equitable sharing of power in decision-making, beyond formal equality of representation.
- **Representing Sectoral Interests:** Because effective collaborative governance relies on cooperation and negotiation, it is important that a full range of interests across the regional food system be represented within and supported by the HFC.
- **Building External Relationships:** While the HFC will itself be a site for collaborative governance, the ability to forge strong relationships with non-member actors (both governmental and non-government) is imperative for tackling complex food systems issues.
- **Promoting Public Participation and Transparency:** To ensure accountability and legitimacy, the HFC's processes must be transparent to the public and offer appropriate channels for public input and participation such that the HFC's obligations to the public good can be broadly monitored and enforced.
- **Embedding Adaptive Capacity:** Given the rapidly changing physical, social, and policy dimensions of food systems, it is important to promote review of HFC functionality, enable responsiveness, and allow the entity to change over time.
- **Fostering Opportunities for Adequate Resourcing:** The HFC must have the needed legal capacities, resources, and expertise to fulfill its objectives and to ensure its long-term viability.

## GOVERNANCE MODEL

### Governance Summary

The HFC will be **established using an internal-external model**, in formal partnership with the Municipality and external food system actors. The HFC will be at arm's length from the Municipality and other key partners to ensure autonomy and community authority, while continuing to work collaboratively to advance mutual goals and collective impact. In this relationship, the HFC will act as a legitimized entity with the mandate to function as an official advisor on food-related issues across Municipal business units and practices.

The HFC will **reside within a fledging organization**, which will support the HFC with legal, financial, administrative, human resource, and governance related responsibilities. The Ecology Action Centre (EAC) will act as the fledge organization to the HFC. The HFC will be a distinct entity from the EAC, operating independently with unique governance and guiding principles. An **Advisory Circle** will be formed to take responsibility for the governance, oversight, and major operations of the HFC. The HFC **may or may not choose to legally incorporate** after a multi-year fledging process, thereby leaving the EAC and becoming fully autonomous.

HRM Legal Services has confirmed that a Contribution Agreement with the EAC is the most effective tool to transfer funding to the HFC. The Contribution Agreement will establish what the funds are to be used for, conditions of use, and reporting requirements.

## Fledging Partnership Rationale

As the HFC will replace the HFPA, model exploration necessitated deep consultation and research. In this process, the HFPA partnered with the Baxter Research Lab at the Dalhousie Schulich School of Law to produce both the 2022 report, [Building Collaboration: Governance in Halifax's Regional Food System](#), and the 2023 report, *Structuring a Food Council for Halifax* (not yet published). These reports explore governance mechanisms and relationships employed by various Canadian HFCs, providing reasonably fine-grained analyses of potential organizational structures and constitutive rules. Halifax Legal was consulted to explore legal implications relevant to the Municipality and to solicit feedback on governance model efficacy and viability.

In accordance with consultation feedback and cumulative best practice research, **the HFC will be structured as an internal-external model**. An internal governance model is one in which the decision-making body is embedded in municipal government and has its mandate determined within the scope of the Municipality's legislation. An external model is one in which this body is formally created outside the legal mechanisms of municipal government, such as in the case of a non-profit or other non-governmental organization. An internal-external hybrid model mixes features of both approaches. As an internal-external governance model, the HFC will be in formal partnership with the Municipality and external food system actors.

In the 2023 report, *Structuring a Food Council for Halifax*, Baxter Lab states that, of a wide variety of governance models, a not-for-profit corporation may best enable the Halifax Food Council to carry out its three core functions. After further consultation with Baxter Lab and relevant partners, it was determined that the effort required to establish a not-for-profit stand-alone entity would distract from the priorities of establishing a resourced food council and advancing the *JustFOOD Action Plan*.

The recommendation is for **the HFC to be initially fledged within an established organization** to reduce the significant burdens associated with standing up a new legal entity. The grace period of a multi-year fledging relationship will provide time and experience for the HFC to determine the necessary level of autonomy and gauge the necessity of establishing a new not-for-profit.

Several organizations were explored as potential hosts. After consultation and criteria review, the **Ecology Action Centre (EAC) was selected as the host organization for the HFC**. Criteria for the selection include the EAC's:

- Role as the founding partner and co-chair of the HFPA since inception in 2013,
- Proven track record as the host organization to the HFPA, providing stewardship for wide variety of administrative and topic-specific supports;
- Strong history of municipal, provincial, and federal-level food work;
- Well-established leadership in convening cross-sectoral and cross-jurisdictional food system actors; and
- Compatible values of social justice, community leadership in decision making, and building sustainable and resilient communities.

Although the HFC will be hosted within the EAC, the HFC will be governed separately and operate with relative autonomy. It will have governance policies (e.g., Terms of Reference) and guiding principles distinct from those of the EAC. The HFC Advisory Circle will be formed to take responsibility for the governance, oversight, and major operations of the HFC. The Advisory Circle

will be supported initially by two full time employees and likely more staff as the HFC expands.

In order to establish the HFC, the formal relationship and associated commitments between HRM, the HFC, and the fledge organization must be carefully explored and outlined. EAC, as the fledge organization, will do the following:

- Issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) and hire a consultant with governance experience to guide the work;
- Oversee the consultant's work to develop a detailed but flexible Terms of Reference (TOR) document, in collaboration with HRM and other HFPA members;
- Guide the consultant's work to explore and test mechanisms for equitable power distribution and sharing;
- Support the recruitment of new members according to the TOR and stand up the HFC Advisory Circle;
- Facilitate initial meetings with its members in order to ensure clear expectations and decision making processes;
- Hire a lawyer to investigate liabilities associated with fledging the HFC and develop contracts for formal commitments from Advisory Circle members. The lawyer may also assist EAC to develop agreements with HRM, in collaboration with HRM Legal; and
- Hire a financial advisor to determine the proper mechanisms for managing HFC finances and auditing processes.

In addition to oversight of the above, as the fledge organization, the EAC will provide:

- Financial management and oversight;
- HR, payroll, and benefits support;
- Communications support;
- Office space and associated infrastructure;
- Basic IT support; and

Other duties may arise with further consultation and as the governance structure evolves.

Over time, the HFC may need to legally incorporate. The advantages or disadvantages to fledging are expected to become more apparent after the HFC is fully established and will be acted on accordingly.

## HFC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The HFC will comprise an **Advisory Circle** responsible for overarching HFC governance and a minimum of **two full time staff members** to support daily operations.

Advisory Circle composition will promote **sectoral diversity** and be grounded in **principles of equity and justice** to support **evidence-based and lived-experience informed decision making**. Membership will include those working directly in food provision and management as well as those focused on advocacy, program delivery, and policy development. A member of Halifax Regional Council may be appointed to the Advisory Circle and Provincial-level representation will be sought

to **foster coordination and alignment of action across jurisdictions**. A staff member of the Municipal Food Team will also sit at the Advisory Circle to ensure alignment with Municipally led action. The HFC will collaborate with and include representatives from the forthcoming (1) Indigenous and (2) African Nova Scotian and Black food governance bodies to ensure strong mechanisms for collaboration and mutual support (**see 1c and IS 2**).

The FC will build **targeted opportunities for community membership** and will develop mechanisms to support **equitable participation and distribution of power**. It will provide compensation to members that would not otherwise be supported to participate (e.g., on behalf of an employer). The HFC will work with members to address barriers such as schedule and timing conflicts, transportation gaps, childcare gaps, and language needs. Diverse methods of communication will be recognized and valued, such as storytelling, written communication, and presentation-based communication.

The initial Advisory Circle may include the following, recognizing that membership and expertise needs will evolve as the HFC expands:

- Partner organization representatives;
- Indigenous Food Coordinator;
- African Nova Scotian and Black Food Coordinator;
- Community member representatives;
- Municipal staff member(s); and
- Member(s) of Halifax Regional Council.

Formal requirements for Advisory Circle membership composition and roles will be established in the Terms of References, as will a transparent and public facing selection process.

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

### Steps completed:

- Complete research into the structuring and establishment of the HFC, in collaboration with the Baxter Lab at the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie
- Consultat with Halifax Legal and Municipal working group on the structure and establishment of the HFC
- Select the EAC as the fledge organization for the HFC and negotiate preliminary roles and responsibilities of the partnership
- Identify priority members, establish priorities, and draft preliminary Terms of Reference for the HFC

## Next Steps:

- Work with the EAC to create an RFP and hire a (1) consultant with experience in governance, (2) lawyer, and (3) financial advisor, who will all work in collaboration with HRM and the HFPA to explore, develop, and document the relationship between the HFC and the EAC as the fledge organization
- In consultation with Halifax Legal, develop a formal partnership agreement between the HFC, the EAC (fledge), and the Municipality, outlining respective commitments and legal responsibilities
- Fully develop the Terms of Reference document to best support the HFC in delivering its mandate. The Terms of Reference will be used to guide the establishment of the HFC and associated Advisory Circle
- Establish formal mechanisms for collaboration with the parallel (1) Indigenous and (2) African Nova Scotian and Black food governance models to ensure strong mechanisms for collaboration and mutual support (**see 1c and IS 2**)
- Build targeted opportunities for community members and develop mechanisms to support equitable participation and distribution of power
- Formally establish the HFC, appointing Advisory Circle members and hiring HFC staff
- Seek additional support for the growth of the HFC, including (1) funding from provincial and federal levels of government, among other funders and (2) in-kind support from various partner organizations and food system actors

## Long Term Objectives:

- Determine the advantages and disadvantages to legal incorporation and act accordingly
- Improve the ability of the Municipality and food system actors to assess and report on food system change over time
- Improve evidence-based decision making across the food system accompanied by improved strategic, systems-level action within government

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Advisory Circle will present an **annual report to Regional Council** with content including, but not limited to, highlights of the HFC's activities and performance during the associated year, project outcomes and updates, priority *JustFOOD Action Plan* recommendations for advancement, and detailed financial statements.

The HFC will also present both an **annual food system monitoring framework report** (**see IS 9d**) and a **5-year comprehensive review** of *JustFOOD Action Plan* implementation progress to Regional Council.

As HFC staff will report to the Advisory Circle, performance evaluation of said staff will be undertaken by the Advisory Circle, utilizing a 360-degree performance evaluation.

# BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

## Fledging Organization Consultant Fees

Fees will be incurred by the host organization in order to flesh out the governance structure; explore and resolve legal liabilities, relationships, and associated contracts; and determine financial responsibilities and systems. **Funds from the existing 2023/2024 contribution agreement between HRM and EAC will be used to cover these fledging costs.** The host organization has approximated the following use of funds:

Budget Item	Cost	HST	Total Cost
Governance consultant	\$15,000	\$1,125	\$16,125
Lawyer	\$5,000	\$375	\$5,375
Financial advisor	\$5,000	\$375	\$5,375
<i>Preliminary Total</i>			\$26,875
EAC Administrative Fee (15%)			\$4,031.25
<b>Total Budget</b>			<b>\$30,906.25</b>

*As stated, these costs will be covered by the existing contribution agreement between HRM and EAC. This total budget is therefore not included in the 2024/2025 financial ask for HRM.*

## Halifax Food Council Budget for 2024-2025 Fiscal Year

Budget Item	Cost	HST	Total Cost
HFC staff total compensation	\$72,800 per employee	—	\$145,600
Supplies	\$3,000	\$225	\$3,225
Travel expenses	\$5,000	\$375	\$5,375
Meeting expenses	\$5,000	\$375	\$5,375
EAC Communication Staff Support	\$10,413	—	\$10,413
JustFOOD Project consultant fees	\$8,000	\$600	\$8,600
Advisory Circle membership compensation	\$40/hr @2 hr/wk x 48 wk (4 wk unpaid vacation) X 4 members \$15,360	\$1,152	\$16,512
Honorariums	\$5,000	—	\$5,000
Website design for the Virtual Community Food Hub	\$1,293 (website design)	\$96.98	\$1,389.98
Community engagement and research	\$16,000	\$1,200	\$17,200
<i>Preliminary Total</i>			\$218,689.98
EAC Administrative Fee (15% administration + 5% comms)			\$32,803.50
<b>Municipal Ask</b>			<b>\$251,493.48</b>

**Total BUDGET = \$282,399.73**  
**Municipal 2024/25 Ask = \$251,493.48**

# RECOMMENDATION 1b.i.

## Community Food Grants Program



1b.i. **Develop a sustainable grant program** operated by the Food Council to provide financial support for community-based initiatives that address community food access and the health of the local food system.

### BACKGROUND

Community-based organizations and grassroots groups represent some of the most creative, attuned, and responsive food system actors. They mobilize residents, act quickly during times of emergency, engage with policy makers and elected officials, and collaborate effectively with on-the-ground partners, increasing collective impact across the food system.

However, community-based groups often have limited resources, budgets, staff, and capacity. Many struggle to access consistent funding and are unable to continue and expand impactful projects when funding windows close. Lack of sustainable funding can lead to projects with decreased impact, heightened competition over available grants, and programs that end as momentum is building, causing harm to the communities that participate in them.

Community engagement for the *JustFOOD Action Plan* highlighted a distinct lack of accessible, low-barrier funding opportunities that advance community-based initiatives addressing food insecurity, literacy, and inequity in HRM. Community food actors regularly noted that the time and effort required to “chase the money and conform to narrow criteria” detracts from their ability to serve their communities. The *JustFOOD Action Plan* therefore recommends the development of an **independent, arms-length funding stream** to support community based food initiatives.

The **Community Food Grants Program** will aim to address many of the factors that disadvantage community-based actors in grant application processes, including:

- Misalignment between the priorities of funders and community needs;
- Centering of colonial and white supremacist ways of knowing and relating knowledge, and the associated delegitimizing of Indigenous and other traditional ways of knowing and relating knowledge;
- Presumed familiarity with bureaucratic systems and processes;
- Use of overly technical language and/or applications that presume high literacy or fluency in English, alienating applicants;
- Digital engagement requirements, which are inaccessible for organizations with minimal digital infrastructure;
- Funding pre-requisites and matching funds, wherein applicants are required to have previously received funding or have the financial capacity to contribute to the program;



- Exclusion of core operational costs such as staffing, which can lead to underpayment of staff, loss of staff, or reliance on unpaid work; and
- Burdensome reporting requirements and metrics that are difficult for organizations to measure, costly, and/or irrelevant to their work.

In response to community need and in an attempt to address significant limitations across the funding landscape, this implementation strategy advances an **annual Community Food Grants Program**, established and delivered by the Halifax Food Council. The Community Food Grants Program will support community-based initiatives that advance and align with the JustFOOD Halifax vision of a more healthy, just, and sustainable food system.

**This strategy has been written in consultation with HRM Legal, FeedNS's Innovation Lab, and Halifax Partnership's Innovation Hub.**

## INTENDED IMPACT

An accessible and sustainable **Community Food Grants Program**, run by the Halifax Food Council (HFC), will empower community-level actors to advance projects that directly reflect community needs and advance systems-level change. A low barrier and flexible program signals that HRM and other funders recognize and trust in communities and community-based organizations as agents of transformative change.

The Grant Program will be designed to:

- Increase **food security, justice, and sovereignty** across HRM through community-rooted responses informed by lived experience and direct connection to community members;
- **Reducing barriers** to application and reporting, and prioritizing typically underserved communities;
- **Increase the accessibility of funding** for food programming and **(re)distribute power** to community-level actors engaged in transformative food system change;
- **Demonstrate impact and value** of low barrier, flexible, and community-based funding and sharing these learnings with other funders;
- **Build capacity and resilience** at the community level, increasing ability of communities to address other food and social issues;
- Offer **training and assistance** with applications and performance measures, increasing long-term capacity for food action and reducing barriers for organizations who serve communities with the highest need; and
- Work directly with community based initiatives and **promote sharing of learnings** to deepen collective understanding of the food system and the unique, community-level needs and barriers to food access, justice, and sovereignty.

# PROJECT SCOPE

## Overview of Community Food Grants Program

The HFC and staff will develop and coordinate the Grant Program, in consultation with the Municipal food team and other granting partners that may elect to combine their grants programs with the Community Food Grants Program.

The Grant Program will **target projects and activities** that:

- Align with principles and recommendations outlined in the *JustFOOD Action Plan*;
- Increase access, availability, and/or choice of food, centered around dignity, agency, and choice;
- Increase community-led food production;
- Promote food justice and sovereignty for equity-deserving communities;
- Support food system coordination and food literacy;
- Advance advocacy efforts that address root causes of food insecurity;
- Promote collaborative, community-led action; and/or
- Demonstrate potential longevity of impact and self-sustainability.

The HFC will design a simple, accessible, and low barrier application and reporting process to reduce the burden on and broaden the field of applicants. **Low barrier application and reporting supports** may include:

- Multiple submission formats and processes (e.g., electronic submission, phone submission, mailed or paper submission, or video submission);
- Short forms with clear instructions, plain language, and ease of use;
- Supports for applications in multiple languages;
- Direct support during the application and reporting process, provided to applicants by HFC staff or members; and
- Direct support for recipients to identify key performance measures and co-create tracking tools that can be easily used for grant reports.

The Program will be designed to **support the long-term sustainability, success, and impact of community projects**. The Program will support this by:

- Co-creating trusting and respectful relationships with communities, and committing to ongoing knowledge sharing and collaboration;
- Acting with flexibility, responding to changing needs and building on the resources, knowledge, and mandates of community-based actors;

- Promoting grant recipients and their associated initiatives through the HFC, Municipal, and other partner channels and linking to other opportunities for advancement; and
- Providing skill building and training opportunities, investing in the development and organizational capacity of grant recipients. These opportunities may be related to:
  - Fundraising, proposal writing, and income-generation;
  - Project management and performance measurement; and
  - Community outreach and engagement.

## Merging with Other Compatible Grant Programs

The HFC will collaborate with partner organizations to explore the potential to combine the Community Food Grants Program with the other compatible grant programs. This may lead to the creation of a centralized application intake process with a shared review/awards process, with separate funding streams that further the partner organizations' granting mandates (e.g., community-led projects, food innovations, and prototyping). This could benefit partner organizations by reducing administrative burden, sharing learnings, and creating a larger pool of funds that could be combined for larger scale proposals or emerging issues. It could benefit applicants by reducing duplication of effort, increasing clarity of opportunities, and providing a wider network for promotion of grants and sharing of learnings.

## Feed Nova Scotia Innovation and Learning Grant Program

In 2023, Feed Nova Scotia launched the community-focused Innovation and Learning Grant Program. This program has a total funding of up to \$500,000 and provides individual grants of up to \$50,000 for "innovations", which can include the development of a program, service, product or process that is new to Nova Scotia; bringing together existing pieces of work in new ways to create something new or innovative; or bringing an innovative program or service that is already happening in one community to a new area or context. In January 2024, FeedNS will be mapping out the next round of Innovation and Learning Grants and have indicated interest in exploring a unified grant intake model, through which their grant intake process would be merged with that of the Community Food Grants Program. FeedNS has worked hard to create a low-barrier, supportive application program; alignment with their grant program could improve the integrity and relevance of the Community Food Grants.

## Supporting Emerging and Grass-roots Community Organizations

Grass-roots groups and more loosely formed community actors are often ineligible to apply for funds as most established granting programs require proof of legal incorporation as a not-for-profit or charity. This requirement skews the funding landscape towards organizations with existing funding, capacity, and privilege; reducing the ability of equity deserving groups and emerging entities to access funds needed to serve their communities. All levels of government are recognizing the need for incorporated entities to fund non-incorporated groups.

Funding for the Halifax Food Grants Program will move from the Municipality and other funders to the charitable fledging organization, the EAC. The EAC will explore the distribution of funding to non-incorporated community based groups. Risks may be mitigated through relationship development, reporting requirements, and frequent connections.

Bill S-216, which has been passed in the Senate and is currently moving through the House of Commons, would allow charities and incorporated entities to provide funds to non-legal or non-charitable groups, while still ensuring robust accountability and transparency measures are in place. Bill S-216 would replace the direction and control requirement with a requirement for the funder to take reasonable steps to ensure all of the funds are used exclusively to further a “charitable purpose”. This shift would allow non-legally incorporated groups more autonomy over funded activities and initiatives. It will be important to the success and impact of the HFC Community Food Grants Program to monitor the outcome of Bill S-216 as it continues to move through the House of Commons.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Leads:** HRM and Halifax Food Council

**HRM** will provide core funding for the Community Food Grants Program. The HFC will oversee, coordinate, and expand the Program.

The **HFC** will consult with institutions, organizations, and government agencies that operate grant programs to identify gaps/opportunities, best practices, and potential alignment between programs. The HFC will also work with community food actors to ensure that the Program is accessible and effectively addresses community priorities and needs.

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

### Steps Completed:

- Complete research into grant programs and best practices
- Begin initial discussions with aligned partner organizations that offer granting programs in order to explore unified intake opportunities

### Next Steps:

- Further develop the Community Food Grants Program, establishing eligibility criteria, priority objectives, selection processes, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- Launch and promote the Program
- Solicit applicants and support them in application processes
- Award and disseminate funds

- Support applicants in identifying reasonable project monitoring and evaluation metrics
- Share learnings from funded initiatives and promote cross-pollination among fundees
- Track feedback, experiences, and learnings from the Program so that it can evolve over time to best serve community needs and respond to emerging issues
- Seek additional funders and aligned grants to increase the impact and breadth of the Program

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Grant recipients will be required to report on program and activity outcomes. Qualitative and quantitative data collected by recipients will deepen our understanding of the Halifax regional food system and will provide an opportunity to **assess unique, community-level needs and barriers to food access, justice, and sovereignty**.

Monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the Grant Program will be established, implemented, and reviewed by the HFC. Recognizing that reporting requirements can be a significant resource burden on small organizations and community food actors, the HFC will design accessible and resource-light reporting processes.

The insight and feedback that grant recipients provide will be integral to assessing whether the Grant Program is achieving the intended impact. With time, applicant and recipient feedback will be used to modify the Grant Program to better suit the evolving needs of communities across HRM.

The HFC will report to Regional Council on Grant Program outcomes through:

- An annual staff report; and
- Bi-annual project updates.

Grant recipients and associated projects will be made available to the public in order to increase transparency, share learnings, and maintain accountability of the Program.

# BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Budget Item	Cost	HST	Total Cost
Total value of grants to be awarded annually to grantees	\$150,000	—	\$150,000
Lawyer	\$25,000	\$1,875	\$26,875
<i>Preliminary Total</i>			\$176,875.00
EAC Administrative Fee (5%)			\$8,843.75
<b>Municipal Ask*</b>			<b>\$185,718.75</b>

**\*Other associated costs for the Program will be incorporated into the overarching HFC budget (see IS 1), and include but are not limited to:**

- Website hosting and online grant application portal (justfoodhalifax.ca aka the Virtual Community Food Hub);
- Administration fees associated with building and maintaining the Grant Program (e.g., books, admin, banking); and
- Legal and/or consulting fees.

# RECOMMENDATION 5.

## Virtual Community Food Hub



5. Create a **virtual community food hub** through the JustFOOD website.
  - a. Establish a central repository of resources that supports community food planning, provides local context on community food security, and promotes dignified food access.
  - b. Share and promote community food services (e.g., food banks), including those that are open beyond traditional working hours.
  - c. Share events, workshops, and training related to food in the region through a public calendar that allows community members to input their own events.

The HRM Food Asset Map is one of the resources that the Virtual Community Food Hub will promote and share. See IS 6a for more details on the Map.

## BACKGROUND

The JustFOOD website ([justfoodhalifax.ca](http://justfoodhalifax.ca)) launched in October of 2021. It acts as the online host of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA), providing the background on the development and origins of the Action Plan. The site also offers additional resources to support community food work and collaborative action towards the common vision of a Halifax Region where:

“no one is hungry, where people and food are celebrated, where the local economy is strong, and the environment is protected for generations to come”.

In 2024/2025, the JustFOOD website will be expanded to act as a **Virtual Community Food Hub**. The Hub will be a central, digital platform that provides easy access to a wide range of food-related information, materials, tools, and resources. The Hub will continue to be used to share *JustFOOD Action Plan* progress reports and related updates or announcements. The Hub will also become the home of the new Halifax Food Council as the HFPA transitions into a new formal collaborative governance body to oversee the *JustFOOD Action Plan*. **See IS 1** for more information on the Halifax Food Council.

## INTENDED IMPACT

The Virtual Community Food Hub will facilitate **collaboration, coordination, and communication** among food system actors, supporting effective and inclusive food system action.

The Hub will be designed to:

- **Increase transparency** of governance and decision-making processes, building community trust and understanding of the Halifax Food Council;
- **Provide avenues for public feedback and participation**, ensuring that governance decisions are responsive and reflect diverse perspectives;

- **Empower residents** to make learn more about what others are doing, what’s happening in their communities, grow their capacity for food action, and make informed, evidence-based decisions through the provision of food-related information, resources, and tools;
- **Foster open dialogue**, encouraging collective action by providing space for food system actors to interact with one another, exchange information, and build relationships; and
- **Build capacity** through the provision of training, resources, and education materials that equip food system actors with the skills and knowledge needed for effective action.

## PROJECT SCOPE

The Virtual Community Food Hub will act to:

- **Host the new Halifax Food Council**, including information about its membership, function, decisions, priorities, and products. The Hub will also celebrate the Halifax Food Policy Alliance, co-leads of the Action Plan, and other long-time advocates for a Food Council;
- **Provide information on and links to affiliates** such as the African Nova Scotian and Black (ANSB) and Indigenous governance bodies, as they stand up;
- **Showcase the *JustFOOD Action Plan* and provide progress updates**, including annual reports and and performance measurement;
- **Highlight key policies and programs**, especially those with avenues for **public participation** (e.g., Backyard Sharing Program and Community Gardens Program);
- Provide information, support grant writing/reporting, intake applications, and showcase successful applicants for the new **Community Food Grants Program** (see IS 1b.i); and
- **Amplify campaigns and other opportunities to advocate** for systems change (e.g., basic incomes and living wages, universal school food programs, local food infrastructure and investment).

The Hub will host specific tools such as:

- Information about and linkage to the *HRM Food Asset Map* (IS 6a) and other tools that support increased understanding of community assets, opportunities, and vulnerabilities;
- Infographics, performance measurement indicators, and trackers that report on the current state of our food system and implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* (see IS 9d);
- Toolkits, workbooks, and community engagement materials used to develop the *JustFOOD Action Plan* (e.g., Community Food Assessment Toolkit) that support communities, land-use planners, and others to advance food action in their neighbourhoods and regions;
- An event calendar promoting food-related events, programs, and resources in HRM; and
- Profiles of food system researchers, to increase understanding of food research in our region, provide opportunities for researchers to connect and amplify each other’s work, and share findings and wisdom gained from research.



The Hub will provide additional resources in a variety of formats such as:

- Advocacy Campaigns
- Reports;
- Articles;
- White papers;
- How-to guides;
- Video tutorials;
- Podcasts;
- Case studies; and
- Dictionaries or glossaries.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Lead:** Halifax Food Council and associated staff will lead the development of the Virtual Community Food Hub.

**Partners:** HRM, community food actors, food researchers, and community members will support the HFC to identify, create, and share relevant information, materials, tools, and resources for the Virtual Community Food Hub.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Virtual Community Food Hub will be monitored and evaluated by the Halifax Food Council.

Monitoring will include:

- Monthly reviews of the event calendar;
- Annual reviews of the research profiles; and
- Annual updates of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* progression.
  - Milestone updates as relevant

Evaluation will include:

- Analyzing website traffic to determine how the Virtual Community Food Hub is being utilized (i.e., what the most common uses are and what pages are most visited).

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

### Steps Completed:

- Establish the JustFOOD website (justfoodhalifax.ca) and upload resources from the Halifax Food Policy Alliance website, including the JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan
- Acquire quote for the transformation of the JustFOOD website into the Hub from a website designer

### Next Steps:

- Identify baseline technical adjustments and content required to transition from the JustFOOD website to the Virtual Community Food Hub
- Collaborate with a web designer to develop the Virtual Community Food Hub, which will include the design of:
  - A visual identity and content format
  - Integrated events calendar template
  - Template design for food researcher profiles
  - Page layout templates for *JustFOOD Action Plan* progress updates and indicator tracking
  - Space for information and products of the HFC
  - Space for forms, details, and intake for the Community Food Grants Program
- Collaborate with community partners to fully develop the calendar feature, which will include inventorying food-related events, programs, and resources
  - Use the Food Asset Map (IS 6a) to advance data on community services and resources
- Generate food system researcher profiles
- Update and embed the Community Food Assessment Toolkit
- Establish monitoring and updating procedures for the Virtual Community Food Hub to ensure information remains accurate and relevant

# BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Budget Item	Cost	HST	Total Cost
Website design from Pinwheel Design	\$1,293	\$96.98	\$1,389.98
<b>Municipal Ask</b>			<b>\$1,389.98</b>

This budgetary ask is included in **IS 1**.

# RECOMMENDATION 6a. HRM Food Asset Map



6. Develop the HRM Food Asset Map, an interactive mapping resource to enable the identification, refinement, and sharing of information about regional food resources, including agricultural land, food outlets, licensed community kitchens, food services, and food advocates.

- a. Build on existing data to create a comprehensive, current database of regional food resources.

## BACKGROUND

A food asset map is a visual, geo-coded representation of the food resources found in a particular area or region. **The HRM Food Asset Map** is currently a beta-stage mapping application intended to enable the identification, refinement, and sharing of information about food resources in the Halifax Region. The Asset Map will include open source food resource data that will support researchers, policymakers, planners, advocates, and community members. Once a baseline map has been designed, the JustFOOD team will work with community partners to test and refine the usability of the Map.

Food resources that the HRM Food Asset Map will capture include:

- Urban and rural agricultural land under production (e.g., farms and community gardens);
- Processing and distribution infrastructure;
- Food outlets;
- Licensed community kitchens;
- Food service providers; and
- Food advocates.

The data captured for each resource will include typical information such as

- Name;
- Location;
- Category of food service/outlet/infrastructure/agency;
- Website;
- Hours of operation; and
- Seasonality.

The map will also capture information relevant to the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, including:

- Local food options;
- Access to fresh fruit and vegetables;
- Emergency food response infrastructure or resources;

- Traditional and diet specific food sources; and
- Resources available for community-use.

The Map will be equipped with iconography, search functions, and layers that will increase user accessibility and functionality.

Data will primarily be collected from existing data resources (e.g., 211, StatsCan) and community partners and regional service providers (e.g., Nova Scotia Public Health, Community Health Boards). Where data does not yet exist, community outreach, consultant support, research institution partnerships, and best practices research will be used to support data identification, access, and manipulation efforts. Whenever possible, **food asset data will be open source.**

The Map will be hosted and maintained on HRM's Municipal website (halifax.ca) and linked to the HFC's Virtual Community Food Hub ([justfoodhalifax.ca](http://justfoodhalifax.ca)).

**This strategy was written in consultation with HRM IT staff.**

## INTENDED IMPACT

The HRM Food Asset Map will:

- Increase the ability of community members to **locate and access food resources** as the Map evolves and becomes more comprehensive;
- Increase the ease and ability of food service providers to **support clients**;
- **Create a foundation of shareable food resource data** that could be layered and built upon for other applications, research, and uses. This data can support community partners in decision-making and program development;
- **Provide food resource data** in an easy to use, easy to extract, visually appealing and searchable online map hosted on halifax.ca and linked to on [justfoodhalifax.ca](http://justfoodhalifax.ca);
- **Increase wider understanding of our food system**, support the identification of gaps or vulnerabilities, and inform projects like the Equity Index, Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Analysis, Regional Planning, Community Profiles and other broader programs gauging community assets, inequities, and vulnerabilities.
- **Identify critical infrastructure and resources** important for **emergency food response** and climate change mitigation (**see IS 45b.ii**);
- **Identify food assets of importance to equity-deserving communities**, including Indigenous, newcomer, African Nova Scotian, and disability communities;
- **Inform development and monitoring** of *JustFOOD Action Plan* and Municipal KPIs;
- Work with community partners to refine and **test the usability of the Map**; and
- **Provide snapshots over time** that demonstrate the evolution of our food system and changes in the food asset landscape.

Overarchingly, the Map will be a functional tool for:

- **Community members** to learn about food resources in their communities;
- **Service providers** to connect to suppliers and other service providers, as well as gain a better understanding of gaps and opportunities to inform their services;
- **Food producers, processors, distributors, and retailers** to coordinate and streamline food system activities, with increased awareness of existing resources and infrastructure;
- **Policy workers and planners** towards complete communities that strengthen our local food system and increase access to good food; and
- **Grassroots activists** to link into a wider network of community actors and advocates.

The focus of work in 2024/25 will be to **develop a baseline food resource geodatabase and map**, which then can be tested and refined by community partners. Beyond Year 1, as the Map evolves, community outreach will include conversations on future versions and **add-ons needed to increase the usability and relevance** of the Map. To date, engagement has identified the following potential future applications of the Map:

- Tools and functionality to increase the ability of community members to locate and access food resources, with a particular focus on culturally preferred, diet-specific, and local food options;
- Addition of other data layers to the map (e.g., transit and active transportation routes, accessibility features, and affordability metrics) and tools to support the assessment of food environments;
- Matchmaking tools to support connection to valuable food infrastructure like community/commercial kitchens, available/suitable land for food production, backyard sharing program, ride sharing/bulk purchasing, and other supportive programs that increase access to and capacity for communities to seek out opportunities.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Lead:** HRM in consultation with the Halifax Food Council

**HRM will lead the development of the Food Asset Map, as the GIS hosts.** The Municipal Food Team will work with HFC, community partners, and consultant(s) to identify and acquire additional data sets, refine the vision for purpose and “story” of the Map, and test the baseline Map through community partners. IT will support this work through providing advice on format, design, and functionality of the Map, and leadership in data sharing, manipulation, and maintenance.

In 2023, HRM Community Safety created a new FTE position to support data analysis, key performance measurement, and GIS utilization. In addition to supporting the implementation of the Public Safety Strategy, this new position, when filled, will further support business unit capacity and understanding of food system data and community vulnerability to food insecurity.

**Community Partners:** The development and maintenance of the HRM Food Asset Map will be further supported by members of the Halifax Food Council and their networks, as well as community

partners and food actors with relevant data and interest in advancing the Map. Additional external partners committed to the development of the HRM Food Asset Map include but are not limited to:

- Change Lab Action Research Initiative (CLARI) - CLARI is actively seeking a local researcher for the 2024/25 academic year to advance data collection, data schemas, and best practices in food asset mapping and sharing in other Regions;
- 211 Nova Scotia;
- Mobile Food Market;
- Feed Nova Scotia; and
- Community Health Boards and Community Health Teams.

**Food Asset Mapping Consultant:** The JustFOOD team have subject matter expertise on the local food system and key actors, infrastructure, and resources; HRM IT staff have expertise on data management, sharing, and presentation. What is missing is expertise on what a food asset map should include (i.e., food asset map framework), best practices for food asset mapping and sourcing/ incorporating food asset datasets.

It will be necessary to contract consultant services to advise, refine, and expand the categories, types, and fields of information required to create a solid framework for the Food Asset Map. To date, the Map has progressed in fits and starts as the JustFOOD team and IT GIS experts have had infrequent capacity to advance it. Dedicated effort and expertise are required to advance the Map's building blocks and datasets. To **build the capacity of HRM and HFC** to progress and maintain the Map, the consultant will **provide training and informed insight** to Municipal staff and community partners on food asset mapping.

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

### Steps Completed:

- Develop a **preliminary data schema** with the support of HRM IT staff
- Collaborate with HRM IT staff to create reliable, replicable, and shareable datasets on:
- Food outlets (from corner stores to farmers' markets to supermarkets)
- Community gardens (and work is underway to map school gardens)
- Progress an **academic research partnership** through the Change Action Research Lab (CLARI) at Saint Mary's University

### Next Steps:

- Procure consultant services to create a foundational Food Asset Inventory Framework (including categories, types, and core fields of information for food resources), identify and incorporate additional datasets, and provide training to HRM staff and key community partners on food asset mapping best practices
- Acquire whole and partial data sets that will increase the efficacy of the map

- Continue to test and refine data categorization and structure (e.g., determining if categories are logical and comprehensive)
- Create standards for food resource categorization and processes to streamline categorization
- Develop protocols for data incorporation, manipulation, clean-up, and sharing;
- Develop data maintenance protocols
- Create user interface design and public facing tools to support use of the Map
- Create opportunities and tools for community partners to test and refine the Map
- Formally launch the Map
- Explore what's possible and relevant for future versions of the Map to serve community needs and interests

## BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Budget Item	Cost	HST	Total Cost
Data consultant	\$20,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$23,000.00
Food Asset	\$2,000.00	\$300.00	\$2,300.00
Mapping training for Municipal staff and community partners	\$2,000.00	\$300.00	\$2,300.00
<i>Preliminary Total</i>			\$25,300.00
EAC Administrative Fee (5%)			\$1,265.00
<b>Total Budget</b>			<b>\$26,565.00</b>





9.d. Use **key performance indicators** to monitor and evaluate Plan progress.

## BACKGROUND

Deliberate food systems transformation work requires a comprehensive **monitoring framework**, a tool for assessment and analysis that can be used to inform decision making processes and incentivize action.

Monitoring frameworks provide an important mechanism to establish baselines and track changes, thereby facilitating performance assessment relative to established targets and goals. As such, monitoring frameworks provide actionable evidence that can be used to hold decision-makers accountable.

Implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region* requires a robust monitoring framework that uses a clear set of relevant, high quality, interpretable, and useful indicators to support evidence-based decision making and policy development.

This implementation plan presents a set of **29 food system indicators** that will form the basis of a food system monitoring framework. A selection of the proposed indicators will be reviewed on an annual basis in order to provide information about the state of the Halifax regional food system. Regularly evaluating and comparing these indicators will enable the Municipality to measure ongoing progress or change across the food system.

**This strategy is based on the indicator framework and principles of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP). HRM became a signatory to the MUFPP in March of 2023.**

## INTENDED IMPACT

Comprehensively, food system monitoring and reporting will improve evidence-based decision making across the food system, supporting improved strategic, systems-level action.

The indicators identified in this implementation plan will be used to:

- **Evaluate the progress and impact** of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* over time;
  - Provide a basis for Plan revisions or strategic adjustments to Plan implementation;
- Improve the ability of the Municipality and food system actors to **assess and report on food system change** over time;

- **Build capacity for food system planning and policy development** at the Municipal level;
  - Improve the Municipality's ability to set **actionable benchmarks and targets**;
  - **Complement other Municipal monitoring and tracking** initiatives focused on outcomes related to community vulnerability and poverty reduction;
- **Strengthen partnerships**, recognizing that data collection, analysis, and sharing will require significant coordination between government and non-government actors; and
  - **Increase knowledge accumulation and transfer** between sectors and food system actors.

## PROJECT SCOPE

As outlined in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, the Halifax Food Council (HFC) will be responsible for monitoring food system progress to ensure (among other objectives) that:

(1) The governance body is operating effectively and adapting to the complex work of food system change; and

(2) The priority recommendations identified in Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* are progressing and having positive impact.

**Monitoring will include** but is not limited to:

- **Publishing an annual review** of a selection of food system indicators; and
- **Providing regular updates** on implementation progress, including an annual update to Halifax Regional Council and a comprehensive five-year review.

As stated, a selection of indicators will be reviewed annually, while others will be reviewed on a five year basis. Reviews will be published publicly and will be included in each update to Regional Council.

Agreement on data collection and analysis will be required for each indicator. Data sharing plans will also need to be developed, so that data can be open and accessible to institutions, organizations, researchers, and the public whenever possible.

## INDICATOR SELECTION

The food system indicators proposed in this implementation plan have been selected to reflect the strategic priorities of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region* and build on the established [MUFPP indicator framework](#). Indicators support specific, measurable, and achievable targets or benchmarks within a given timeframe. These targets provide a reference point for assessing performance and tracking progress. Indicators will enable the Municipality and other Plan partners to assess the impact of policy measures or interventions.

**Indicators will be regularly reviewed and refined** to ensure that they remain relevant, effective, and aligned with strategic priorities.

## CRITERIA

A core set of criteria were used to select the food system indicators presented in this implementation plan.

- **Strategic impact and Leverage:**
  - Does this indicator effectively measure the advancement of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* recommendations?
  - Will researching this indicator bring benefits to our municipality?
  - How can this indicator build momentum for or inform food system action?
  - Does this indicator have the capacity to grow partnerships and increase collective impact across the food system?
- **Measurability:**
  - Is the data available or easy to access?
  - Can sufficient resources be made available to collect the relevant data and conduct the required analysis?
- **Sustainability and Accountability:**
  - Do the Municipality or Plan partners have longer-term capacity to monitor this indicator?

Indicators should also answer the following questions:

1. **Where are we now** – how are we currently evaluating the situation?
2. **Where do we want to be** – what changes do we want to see and by when?
3. **How will we get there** – what actions are necessary to achieve the desired results?
4. **How will we measure success** – what are the benchmarks that we will need to see as clear evidence of success?

## INDICATORS

The 29 indicators can be organized into two main groups:

1. **Self-assessment binary indicators** that look at the presence (or absence) of a specific item and/or policy. This typology of indicators is often complemented by a set of qualifiers that help understand progress over time.
2. **Quantitative Indicators** that measure percentages, absolute numbers, and/ or rates that address progress against specific baselines.

Where indicators have been adopted from the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, additional data collection and assessment information and tools are available.

**The Indicator Table for the JustFOOD Monitoring Framework can be found in the Appendix**

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Lead:** Halifax Food Council

**Partners:** HRM and Community Food Partners

**HRM:** Many indicators will be assessed using data that exists within or is collected by the Municipality. Where data does not already exist, the Municipality will support the necessary data collection efforts where possible.

- HRM is leading the advancement of the HRM Food Asset Map, crucial for data collection and knowledge required to calculate many of the indicators. **See IS 6A** for how this will be advanced in partnership with the Municipal Food Team, HRM IT, HFC, community partners and consultant support.

A range of **community food partners** have also been identified as data collection supports, including but not limited to:

- Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture;
- Farmers Markets Nova Scotia;
- Nova Scotia Health;
- United Way;
- Feed Nova Scotia; and
- Mobile Food Market.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring framework and associated indicators will be reassessed for relevance and impact on an annual basis. Indicator relevance and impact will become increasingly more clear over a longer period of time.

Indicators should be removed from the evaluation framework when they are no longer considered to be relevant or powerful, or if the appropriate data cannot be successfully or accurately collected. New indicators can be added to the monitoring framework as deemed appropriate by the forthcoming Halifax Food Council, using the indicator selection criteria. Existing indicators can be refined in line with strategic priorities.

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

### Steps completed:

- Determine indicator selection criteria
- Select an initial set of indicators using the Milan Urban Policy Framework, Council Priorities Scorecard, and other relevant food system monitoring guiding documents and reports (e.g., Food Counts: Halifax Food Assessment)

### Next steps:

- For each indicator, determine data collection frequency (e.g., annual collection, biannual, every five years)
- Adapt language and methodology taken from Milan Urban Food Policy Pact indicators to be fully relevant to and appropriate for the Halifax region
- Develop methodology (data collection and analysis plan) for each indicator
- For each indicator, formally identify the partnerships, resources, and funds necessary for data collection and analysis. Attain commitments as necessary
- Develop a data sharing plan that will enable various levels of government, institutions, organizations, and communities to access all data that can be published as open data
- Develop a reporting plan to clearly articulate and communicate key messages to the public and to policy and decision makers.

## BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Monitoring work will be supported by the Halifax Food Council and associated staff (**see IS 1**). Municipal IT staff will continue to support food system related data collection and analysis.

**There is no additional budget ask specific to the monitoring framework at this time.**



**12e.** Collaborate with libraries, schools, community centres, and faith based-organizations to provide **easily accessible social services** (e.g., literacy services, legal services, resource fairs) to migrant workers in agriculture.

Aligned recommendation:

**12.** Promote **fair and decent employment for all**, including fair economic relations, fair wages, and improved labour conditions within the food and agriculture sector.

## BACKGROUND

Every year, at least 200 Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) come to HRM to work in agriculture, restaurants, hospitality, manufacturing, and childcare. Since 2021, [No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia](#) (NOII-NS) has organized 16 educational webinars for migrant workers throughout NS and engaged with hundreds of workers in the agricultural sector outside of HRM.

In 2022, [Statistics Canada reported](#) that there were **1,649 TFWs working in Nova Scotia's agriculture and agri-food sector**, highlighting that these workers are an [integral and increasing part of the labour force](#). TFWs role in the agriculture sector makes them **vital to Nova Scotia's economy**. Between 2017-2022, more than half of the Nova Scotian employers who hired TFWs under the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP) and were found to be in non-compliance with their responsibilities as an employer were located within HRM. As such, there is a strongly identified need for **government-funded programs that support the rights and wellbeing of migrant workers in HRM**.

The service landscape for TFWs in Nova Scotia is much less established than in other Maritime provinces. Provincial governments in PEI and New Brunswick fund community organizations to provide services to TFWs. However, the same funding does not exist in Nova Scotia. As such, many TFWs in Nova Scotia are not able to access critical support for navigating immigration or workplace challenges.

HRM is a signatory to the [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact](#) (MUFPP). Civil society and the private sector have major roles to play in feeding cities; bringing experience, innovation and campaigns for more sustainable food systems and mainstreaming the critical need for a socially inclusive and a rights-based approach in urban food policy. The Pact highlights that food policies are closely related to other urban challenges, demonstrating that municipalities have an obligation to address the social and economic issues that prevent equity deserving groups from participating in a just food system.

[No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia](#) (NOII-NS) is the only dedicated migrant worker support organization that engages in outreach, accompaniment, public education, and advocacy for workers in Nova Scotia. The HFWA worked closely with NOII-NS to develop a set of recommendations for *Part A of the JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*, in consultation with migrant agricultural workers across Nova Scotia (see [Pages 48 – 49](#)). It is therefore critical that NOII-NS continues to play a leading role in the implementation of Plan recommendations.

NOII-NS has identified firsthand from workers that there is **an urgent need for access to English language classes**. Workers express that this would address significant barriers to accessing critical services and resources and would ease their transition into living and working in our region. Recent mapping and gap analysis identified the top barrier for workers on TFW visas in the Maritimes was a lack of access to English language classes.

To address this barrier, this implementation strategy advances the development of a **curriculum for Level 0, Level 1 and Level 2 TFW English learners to enhance language skills, led by NOII-NS**. The curriculum will be delivered through lesson plans that focus on workplace and everyday skills and knowledge, **with a particular focus on workers' rights**.

**This Strategy was written by NOII-NS, in consultation with the JustFOOD team.**

## INTENDED IMPACT

The English for Migrant Workers (EMW) Pilot will create and deliver an “English as an Additional Language” (EAL) course designed for TFWs, that can teach Canadian-specific life skills in combination with literacy lessons.

The EMW Pilot, delivered primarily in virtual format, will:

- Improve workers' **language skills**;
- Build workers' **connections and community participation in HRM**, combating isolation;
- **Increase workers' confidence** in navigating the Canadian employment market and legal system, and;
- Deliver essential information about **work hazards and labour rights**.

Key material from online lessons will be recorded in video format so students can consult videos asynchronously and share what they are learning. Creating videos of key lessons and information will also help teachers deliver lessons in following years. A consistent weekly class will provide migrant workers with a **safe and supportive environment to comfortably discuss language questions and build community connections**.

This Pilot will be **designed for food workers across the food system, including TFWs employed at restaurants and grocery stores, as well as those working in hospitality** (i.e., hotels and catering companies).

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, NOII-NS offered an informal conversational English class to a group of TFWs. The EMW Pilot will incorporate knowledge gained from this positive experience and will seek insight from the experiences of other migrant justice organizations across Canada.

## PROJECT SCOPE

**NOII-NS will develop and deliver the curriculum**. Over the course of the pilot, NOII-NS will deliver three 10-week courses. Each course will involve weekly 1.5 hour lessons. NOII-NS will create



a classroom space that is responsive to TFW needs and that builds community among workers. The Pilot will welcome **30 adult learners per year** (10 adult learners per course among three levels).

Given NOII-NS' experience in delivering English classes to migrant workers in the agriculture sector, the organization is well versed in the many language or learning-related challenges that migrant workers face in their country or region of work, such as:

- Varying levels of digital literacy and internet access;
- Low literacy in native languages; and
- Limited access to supportive educational materials.

Transportation barriers will be mitigated through remote delivery.

NOII-NS will work with an experienced curriculum developer to create **10 educational videos**, each 10 minutes in length, that can be replayed later by students and be used in future course offerings. Videos will:

- Have a strong foundational focus on workers rights; and
- Teach workplace and everyday skills and knowledge, such as:
  - Reading a recipe,
  - Filing a workers compensation board claim,
  - Contacting and communicating with insurance, or
  - Sending money abroad via a bank or remittance service.

The Pilot will invite remote-learning students to participate in a **collective field trip at the end of the course** to address ongoing concerns and barriers that TFWs face in connecting to Canadian society and culture. Field trips will also enhance participants' connections to community.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Lead:** No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia. NOII-NS staff roles during the Pilot will be:

- **Pilot Manager:** provide guidance to the EMW Coordinator, including meeting on a weekly basis to find solutions to challenges and ensure objectives are being met.
- **EMW Coordinator:** recruit English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers, coordinate curriculum design, liaise with community partners, coordinate the design of promotional materials and support logistics.
- **EMW Teacher:** develop lesson plans and deliver course content.
- **Graphic Designer:** support the development of communications and promotional materials.

**Partners:** NOII-NS is in ongoing conversation with the following prospective partner organizations:

- **Halifax Workers' Action Centre** offers free legal information to low-wage, non-unionized workers in Nova Scotia. This partnership will bring expertise on topics of worker rights and Nova Scotia Labour Standards to be incorporated into the curriculum.
- **Office of the Worker Counsellor** provides assistance, education, and advocacy support for individuals dealing with Workers Compensation or occupational health and safety systems in Nova Scotia. This partnership will offer expertise on these topics.
- **Donna Pearce, Program Development and QA Coordinator for ESL Services at Brock University** will support EAL curriculum development. Pearce has previously designed and delivered an English for Agricultural Workers course in Ontario and is interested in advising NOII-NS on adapting existing curricula to the specific needs of HRM's TFWs.

**Halifax Food Council:** A representative from NOII-NS and TFWs will be asked to sit on the HFC Advisory Circle, to continue the relationship and advisory role. NOII-NS will provide regular updates on the Pilot to the HFC (including the Municipal Food Team) and will submit a Pilot evaluation detailing impact of the Pilot upon completion, which will also inform considerations of establishing longer-term programs to support TFWs in HRM.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The EMW Pilot will empower students to **take an active role in advocating for themselves using the English language**. NOII-NS estimates that the pilot will reach 30 adults in its first year.

Monitoring and evaluating the Pilot's progress and objectives will include:

- **Regular surveying** by the EMW Coordinator to monitor growth in individual student's ability to confidently speak and understand English, as well comfort in participating in HRM communities and culture; and
- **Monitoring student involvement** through the number of students who complete assigned coursework, submit worksheets, attend field trips and participate in classes.

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

**Steps completed:**

- Scope Pilot's scale and deliverables
- Host initial conversations with potential partner organizations

**Next steps:**

- Preparation:
  - Recruit and hire of project staff
  - Conduct an assessment of key issues to address in the curriculum

- Design curriculum in consultation with community partners
- Promotion and registration:
  - Creation of promotional materials (i.e., course description, online and hard copies of posters)
  - Develop selection criteria for prospective TFW students and finalize registration form
  - Open the course for registration and promote to TFWs in HRM;
  - Survey students regarding their availability to schedule the class at a time that works best for the majority of students.
- Pilot delivery of EAL course (Level 0) for TFWs in HRM (July 1, 2024 - September 9, 2024)
  - Develop videos of weekly lessons with video editor and through collaboration with partner organizations
  - Plan and finalize class field trips
  - Host course evaluations for students and teachers
  - Draft and submit final report on successes and lessons learned for subsequent courses

## BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Budget Item	Cost	HST	Total Cost
Pilot Manager	2 hr/week x 54 wks = \$3625.56	\$543.83	\$4,169.39
EMW Coordinator	10 hr/wek x 52 wks = \$17,456.40	\$2618.46	\$20,074.86
EMW Teacher	3 courses = \$2250	\$337.50	\$2,587.50
Video/Content Editor	\$2000	\$300	\$2,300.00
Partner Organizations	5hrs = \$125	\$18.75	\$143.75
Travel Expenses	\$525	\$78.75	\$603.75
Materials and Supplies	\$500	\$75	\$603.75
Subscriptions & Memberships	\$780	\$117	\$897.00
Graphic Designer	\$500	\$75	\$575.00
<i>Preliminary Total</i>			\$1596.31
EAC Administrative Fee (5%)			\$1596.31
<b>Total Budget</b>			<b>\$33,522.56</b>

# Migrant Worker Welcome Bags Pilot



**12e.i. Develop multiple-language information packages to share with workers** upon their arrival in Nova Scotia that detail existing public services and how to access them.

*See aligned recommendations 12 and 12e.*

## BACKGROUND

Nova Scotia has the largest number of Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) within Atlantic Canada. The number of TFWs in the province has increased annually since 2015, with the exception of 2017 and 2020. **Approximately 200 TFWs are hired each year in HRM** under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), with most under the [low-wage stream](#).

Employers looking to hire a TFW under the low-wage stream typically do so when the job in demand cannot be filled by a citizen or permanent resident of Canada. To qualify for this category, the job salary must be lower in comparison to the average wage of the province. The TFWP is part of a long history of labour practices in Canada in which racialized groups are recruited to perform grueling and poorly paid work while being simultaneously excluded from permanent settlement pathways and government services that require permanent resident or Citizen status.

Statistics Canada recognizes that temporary foreign workers are an integral part of the labour force. These workers play a vital role in the agriculture sector and, therefore, in Nova Scotia's economy. However, despite their decades of contribution to the regional food system, TFWs are kept in a state of precarity by policies and practices that deny them basic labour protections, prevent them from settling permanently in Canada, and keep them dependent on the goodwill of their employers.

**See IS 12** for additional background and rationale for this Pilot, including:

- Identified need for government-funded programs that support rights and wellbeing of TFWs in HRM, particularly as lack of funding in Nova Scotia (as compared to other Maritime Provinces) limits the ability of community organizations to provide critical support for navigating immigration, workplace, and community integration challenges;
- HRM commitment, as signatories to the Milan Pact and JustFOOD endorsers, to exploring means of supporting the most vulnerable members of our communities and workers in our food system; and
- Established partnership with NOII-NS as a critical advisor for development of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* and leader in support and advocacy for TFWs.

This implementation strategy is recommending the **NOII-NS led Pilot** through which **information packages (Welcome Bags) are distributed to migrant workers** upon arrival in HRM.

**This Strategy was written by NOII-NS, in collaboration with the JustFOOD team.**

## INTENDED IMPACT

Although migrant workers play an essential role in the local food system and regional economy, many are unaware of or unable to enforce their rights as workers. Most TFWs receive a closed work permit that allows them to work for one designated employer and the resulting dependency makes it extremely difficult for them to leave an abusive workplace or attempt to enforce their rights.

The objective for this Pilot is to **increase TFWs' awareness and understanding of their rights and responsibilities in Nova Scotia**. Providing the tools and services that help migrant workers exercise their rights upon arrival is essential to **promoting fair and decent employment opportunities**.

Information packages for TFWs can provide useful information on:

- How to file complaints about worker rights violations;
- How to apply for open work permits; and
- How to connect with support organizations.

### Short Term Objectives:

- TFWs can access relevant services and community resources;
- TFWs have a greater understanding of their rights and are supported in exercising them;
- TFWs are aware of NOII-NS and know how to connect with the organization; and
- TFWs have access to items that are useful in emergency situations.

### Long Term Objectives:

- TFWs are better supported and living in safer conditions while in HRM.

## PROJECT SCOPE

NOII-NS has an established track record of supporting migrant workers through an ethos of mutual aid and solidarity. Between 2021 and 2023, NOII-NS provided support to over 4,800 migrant workers in the province.

In 2021, NOII-NS distributed welcome bags to 1,133 migrant workers arriving in Nova Scotia, including personal protective equipment, snacks, and information on migrant worker rights and responsibilities. Workers expressed that the packages enabled them to feel confident engaging with NOII-NS and provided them with essential information on their rights as workers.

Welcome Bags for this Pilot will include:

- **Multiple-language information packages** that outline existing services and community resources available for TFWs and how to access them;
- Information detailing **workers' rights** in plain language;

- **Contact information** for NOII-NS; and
- **Practical items** useful for migrant workers, such as emergency preparedness materials and personal hygiene products.

## Addressing Structural Barriers

This pilot will address structural barriers (e.g., transportation, language, cost, and culture) and support the participation of equity-deserving migrant worker communities in the following ways:

- **Location and Transportation:** Welcome packages will be distributed at a predetermined location and time that is easily accessible to TFWs (e.g. popular retail locations), with the option for direct home delivery.
- **Meeting Migrants Where They Are:** NOII-NS will engage in additional outreach activities at convenient times and locations
- **Communication:** While community organizations generally use email, phone or in-person forms of communication, TFWs typically rely on WhatsApp as their primary form. NOII-NS will continue to use WhatsApp as its primary communication channel.
- **Language:** Language barriers present a challenge for service provision to migrant workers, especially for those who do not speak English or have limited English speaking capabilities. Information packages will be available in English, Spanish and other identified languages. Migrant workers with low literacy will be able to communicate with NOII-NS via voice notes on WhatsApp.
- **Work Hours:** The operating hours of many community organizations do not correspond with the times migrant workers are able to seek out services. NOII-NS will ensure that the delivery or pick-up options for welcome bags match migrant workers' availability (e.g. evenings and weekends outside of regular workday hours).
- **Cost:** Welcome packages will be provided free of charge.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Lead:** No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia. NOII-NS staff roles during the Pilot will be:

- **Pilot Manager:** Support the Pilot by providing guidance to the Welcome Bag Coordinator, including meeting on a weekly basis to find solutions for challenges and track progress.
- **Welcome Bag Coordinator:** Coordinate the logistics of welcome bags, including partnerships, planning, budgeting, procurement, packing, volunteer coordination, promotions, transportation, tracking key metrics, and evaluation. The Coordinator will be responsible for outreach activities with TFWs in HRM and for responding to inquiries via WhatsApp.
- **Research Assistant:** Develop multiple-language information packages and educational resources that will be included in welcome bags.
- **Graphic Designer:** Develop visually accessible communications tools for information packages and additional educational materials.

The Pilot Manager and Coordinator will be bilingual in English and Spanish, which will permit effective and meaningful communication with Latin American TFWs.

**Partners:** There is a need for increased networking and collaboration between organizations serving migrants in order to share knowledge and exchange best practices. NOII-NS has initiated partnership conversations with:

- Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group (NSPIRG): NOII-NS is currently a member of the NSPIRG working group at Dalhousie University. Potential areas for collaboration include support in securing a venue for packaging welcome bags and space for storage, as well as support with recruiting volunteers to assemble welcome bags.
- Department of Social Justice and Community Studies, Saint Mary's University: Conversations are underway regarding an experiential learning placement for students to support the pilot through research or volunteer support.

**Halifax Food Council:** NOII-NS will provide regular updates on the Pilot to the HFC and will submit a final report on impact of the Pilot, which will also inform considerations of establishing longer-term programs to support TFWs in HRM and effective methods for future connection with TFWs.

**Municipal Food Team:** Staff from Community Safety will connect NOII-NS with emergency preparedness resources from Emergency Management and HalifACT to support preparation of Welcome Bags.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Success in achieving outcomes will be monitored by:

- **Measuring number of Welcome Bags distributed** and tracking which distribution format and location was best received;
- **Seeking feedback** from Welcome Bag recipients via WhatsApp on the usefulness of the contents and whether additional supports can be included; and
- **Hosting a debrief** with volunteers about their experiences, with a focus on what they heard in conversation with migrant workers who received Welcome Bags.

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

**Steps completed:**

- Connect with and conduct initial conversations with potential project partners
- Scope the scale, distribution methods, and key components of Welcome Bags

## Next steps:

- Preparation and recruitment of Pilot staff:
  - Create job descriptions.
  - Recruit and hire Pilot staff.
- Research and creation of materials:
  - Identify TFWs within HRM and potential locations for outreach and distribution of welcome bags
  - Compile research and educational materials to include in bags
  - Finalize the design and contents of information packages and educational materials in English and Spanish
- Outreach and engagement:
  - Reach out to and schedule meetings with potential partner organizations
  - Draft communications materials for social media outreach
- Distribution of welcome bags and project evaluation:
  - Recruit and train volunteers to support the assembly of welcome bags
  - Distribute welcome bags to migrant workers in HRM
  - Host a debrief session with staff, volunteers and project partners to review the initiative and establish best practices and lessons learned
  - Develop a “How-To” document for other organizations seeking to support migrant workers in their region



# BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Budget Item	Cost	HST	Total Cost
Project Manager	\$1,678.50	\$2,51.78	\$1,930.28
Welcome Bag Coordinator	\$2,909.40	\$436.41	\$2,300.00
Graphic Designer	\$500	\$75	\$575.00
Research Assistant	\$1,040	\$156	\$1,196.00
Travel expenses	\$500	\$75	\$575.00
Materials & Supplies	\$420	\$63	\$483.00
<i>Preliminary Total</i>			\$8,105.09
EAC Administrative Fee (5%)			\$405.25
<b>Total Budget</b>			<b>\$8,510.34</b>

# RECOMMENDATION 17.

## Community Orchard Pilot



**17.** Use Municipal facilities and assets to offer food programs, grow food, and support public food infrastructure.

*Aligned recommendations:*

**31b.** Increase the planting of food-bearing trees when planting new trees in parks and on other civic lands, and encourage community stewardship of these community orchards through partnerships with local gleaning organizations.

**31 a vii.** Promote and explore expansion of the Urban Orchard program that may provide free fruit trees to gardens on Municipal land.

## BACKGROUND

A community orchard is a collection of fruit and/or nut trees that are used or shared by communities and grow in publicly accessible areas such as public green spaces, parks, schools, churchyards, and allotments. Community orchards are a collective resource and are not managed for personal or business profit.

In 2014, HRM and Dalhousie University published [Halifax's Urban Orchard Project: Workshop Discussion Paper](#), which responds to a 2014 motion passed by Halifax Regional Council to “develop and implement an urban orchard pilot project plan” as an undertaking within the Healthy Communities Core Priority Areas. This motion led to the development of the first Municipal urban orchard, planted in 2014 and located adjacent to the community garden and community oven at Leighton Dillman Park, part of the Dartmouth Commons.

The Workshop Discussion Paper explores mechanisms and considerations for community orchard development, stating that “*Halifax citizens have identified the development of an orchard pilot project in the city as a means to make their communities healthier and more liveable.*” This feedback was echoed throughout public engagement for the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*, indicating a long standing interest in community orchards.

This implementation strategy advances the **expansion of the Leighton Dillman Park Community Orchard**. This site has been selected as Horticulture already services the park. There is also pre-existing water access and an established community group operating within the Park. The Pilot aligns with and supports recommendations made in the HRM Urban Forest Master Plan.

**This Strategy was developed in collaboration with the HRM's Horticulture team.**

## INTENDED IMPACT

The Community Orchard Pilot supports the **integration and maximization of Municipal assets for food demonstration, production, access, and literacy** by planting fruit/nut trees on centrally

located, well-accessed Municipal land. The pilot will:

- **Demonstrate and normalize food production** in the public sphere;
- Revitalize the existing Leighton Dillman Community Orchard;
- **Act as a food literacy asset**, where community members can learn about fruit/nut trees through interpretive signage;
- **Encourage or strengthen community activities** related to fruit/nut tree growing and harvesting; and
- Provide Municipal staff and community partners with **training on growing and maintaining fruit/nut trees**, increasing capacity for other community orchards, and fruit/nut trees at home and elsewhere in the Region.

## PROJECT SCOPE

Year One (2024/2025) of the Pilot will be overseen by the Urban Agriculture Specialist (**see IS 32a. ii**), executed in partnership with HRM Horticulture East. Horticulture staff will plant 10 new fruit/nut trees in Leighton Dillman Park, expanding the existing urban orchard. Because Horticulture is short-handed with current operations, the Pilot includes funding to support their additional work to expand the site, plant, and maintain the trees.

Careful tree maintenance will be necessary for the first 5 years of each tree's life to ensure healthy fruit production. Dedicated care and maintenance is crucial and funding should continue to be provided during this period.

In year one (2024/2025), the Urban Agriculture Specialist will explore ways in which the Orchard can be used to promote food literacy and interest in or capacity for fruit/nut tree stewardship. Food literacy promotion may include:

- Engaging a subject matter expert to provide training for Horticulture staff (whose expertise rests in ornamentals), as well as insight and direction related to tree care and selection. Workshops may be open to community partners, if suitable.
- Engaging with the community through interpretive signage, supporting knowledge of fruit/nut tree care and sparking interest in being involved in maintenance and future harvesting.

The learnings from the Leighton Dillmon Pilot, partnership with Horticulture, and community outreach will be used to explore and strategize expansion of the pilot and the development of additional community orchards in future years.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Lead:** Municipal Food Team and Urban Agriculture Specialist, in partnership with HRM Horticulture.

- Horticulture responsibilities:
  - Site preparation

- Initial tree planting
- Maintenance (e.g., watering, pruning, pest control)
- Urban Agriculture Specialist responsibilities:
  - Procure trees and soil
  - Oversee community engagement
  - Procure any interpretive signage
  - Organize training materials and workshops for horticulture staff

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation of the pilot will include closely monitoring the health of the trees, while also seeking to evaluate community engagement and use as trees mature and begin to produce fruit. Evaluation will include:

- Tracking the number of fruit and nut trees planted by HRM annually;
- Monitoring of the growth and health of the trees;
- Monitoring of maintenance to identify potential for streamlining processes and expansion to future sites;
- Measuring the impact of training, such as the number of staff trained and self-identified capacity for fruit/nut tree growing; and
- Developing a monitoring and evaluation plan for community use once trees reach fruit bearing age.

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

### Steps Completed:

- Confirm partnership with Horticulture and identified roles and responsibilities
- Scope out scale of Pilot and established budget
- Select pilot site
- Connect with a recommended fruit/nut tree specialist who can provide expertise on tree selection, maintenance, as well as offer training

### Next Steps:

- Provide training related to care and maintenance of fruit trees for Horticulture staff
- Research and select tree varieties with the caveat that the larger the caliper of tree

- Prepare site
- Procure and plant trees in May and October of 2024
- Create knowledge products, design and install interpretive signage
- Maintain the orchard with the support of Horticulture
- Develop a long term plan for funding, maintenance, future site selection, purchase of additional trees, training, harvesting and community involvement

## BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Budget Item	QTY	Rate	Cost	HST (15%)	Total Cost
Trees	10	\$100/tree	\$1,000	\$150	\$1,150
Additional Supplies	1	\$600	—	\$90	\$690
Initial planting of 10 trees	1	\$2,000	—	\$45.00	\$2,000
Maintenance Labour	2 staff at 2 hours/ week, for 28 weeks	\$25/hour	\$3,000	—	\$3,000
Training with fruit tree expert	1	—	\$1391	\$209	\$1,600
Interpretive signage	2	\$200	\$400	—	\$400
<b>Total Budget</b>					<b>\$8,840.00</b>

# RECOMMENDATION 22 AND 23e. Indigenous Food Justice and Sovereignty



**22.** Establish and fund an **Indigenous food-governance model**, promoting the right to self-governance and sovereignty, recognizing the right of Indigenous communities to define their own food systems.

**23.e.** Fund a **full-time food coordinator staff position** at the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC).

*Aligned recommendation:*

**1c.** Centre racial equity and increase community power in food governance and ensure that the Council reflects diverse perspectives and provides opportunities for communities to lead and influence food action and system change in our food system towards increased food justice and food sovereignty.

## BACKGROUND

Indigenous food sovereignty enables and supports Indigenous Peoples in their right to (1) access healthy and culturally preferred foods and (2) exercise autonomy over where and how their food is produced, harvested, hunted, and fished. Indigenous food sovereignty necessitates the right to self-determination of Indigenous food systems, including the ability to access traditional food as well as to operate sustainably apart from or outside of an industrialized food system.

Canada's history of colonialism and marginalization of Indigenous Peoples includes the use of food as a tool of oppression, the destruction of traditional food systems, and the creation of policies that limit Indigenous communities' ability to hunt, fish, grow, and gather. Indigenous food justice works to address these social and environmental injustices, providing a restorative framework to strengthen Indigenous food systems. Through Indigenous food justice, food can be a catalyst for healing, reconciliation, and cultural resurgence.

In order to advance Indigenous food justice and sovereignty efforts across the Halifax regional food system, an Indigenous Advisory Group was organized to work in collaboration with the Halifax Food Policy Alliance. This advisory group drafted a set of recommendations for the *JustFOOD Action Plan* that aim to respond to community-specific needs, recognizing the right of Indigenous communities to define their own food systems. These recommendations, found on pages 57 – 60 of the Plan, were also informed by community engagement events supported by the Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre.

In accordance with Plan recommendations, this implementation strategy advances the development of a **full time Food Coordinator position** at the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC); the development of an **Indigenous food governance model**; and the **integration** of said model with the Halifax Food Council (HFC). In recognition of the right to self-determination, the Indigenous food governance body will advance the Indigenous recommendations independently from the HFC, while

working closely to ensure alignment and advancement of mutual goals for broader food system transformation.

***This strategy was developed in collaboration with an Indigenous Working Group internal to MNFC.*** *The internal Working Group was struck to explore community food needs and actions that the Food Coordinator may progress in collaboration with the wider MNFC staff. The internal Working Group will act to provide guidance to the Food Coordinator, when hired.*

## INTENDED IMPACT

The creation of an Indigenous Food Coordinator role and the establishment of an Indigenous food governance model will advance **Indigenous food sovereignty, justice, and security** efforts across the region. Likewise, the centering of Indigenous approaches and perspectives will be critical to the success of the HFC as a governing body. This strategy **recommends that the Municipality provide multi-year core funding** for the Indigenous Food Coordinator and associated Governance Model. The Coordinator and Advisory Group/Governance Model will also pursue additional funding and opportunities to expand the work.

## PROJECT SCOPE

The Food Coordinator will report directly to the MNFC Program Manager and will work with all program leads within the MNFC to establish a community-based food justice and sovereignty network for the urban Indigenous community.

The Coordinator will:

- Advance the Indigenous recommendations of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, as drafted by the Indigenous advisory group and informed by community engagement;
- Advocate for actions and changes that promote Indigenous food justice and sovereignty;
- Serve as a member of the HFC;
  - Work with the HFC to promote collaboration and mutual support between Indigenous and settler communities and organizations;
- Explore and test a variety of Indigenous food governance models with community input and feedback; and
  - Explore mechanisms to integrate an Indigenous food governance body with the HFC.

The Indigenous Food Coordinator and the forthcoming Indigenous food governance body will work with the HFC to:

- Develop strong mechanisms for collaboration and mutual support between Indigenous and settler communities and organizations across the food system;

- Center racial equity in food system governance;
- Ensure that the HFC reflects and prioritizes diverse perspectives;
- Explore opportunities for additional funding and support to expand the work; and
- Increase community power in food system governance by providing opportunities for communities to lead and influence food action and system change.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Lead:** Indigenous Food Coordinator and the Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Justice Advisory Group

The **Indigenous Food Coordinator position** will be hosted within the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC). A working group internal to the MNFC was established to support the creation of a job description for this role.

The **HFC** will support the Indigenous Food Coordinator in their work and will ensure **strong mechanisms for cross-organizational collaboration and mutual support**.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Indigenous Food Coordinator will report to the MNFC Program Manager and performance will be evaluated internally by the MNFC. The Indigenous Food Coordinator will prepare annual reports to the HFC detailing activities undertaken, project metrics, and an evaluation of the impact of provided funding. The HFC will include this information in its annual report to Halifax Regional Council.

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

### Steps Completed:

- Strike internal MNFC Working Group
- Develop job description

### Next Steps:

- Hire the Indigenous Food Coordinator
- Develop mechanisms for strong and regular collaboration and mutual support between the Indigenous Food Coordinator and the HFC
- Identify priority projects and JustFOOD recommendations for the Coordinator to advance in Year One and support identification of recommendations and projects for future years



- Explore Indigenous food governance models
  - Formally establish a Community Working Group to support the exploration and testing of governance models

## BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Budget Item	Total Cost
Total Compensation for Food Coordinator	\$72,800
MNFC Administrative Fee (10%)	\$7,280
<i>Preliminary Total</i>	\$80,080
EAC Administrative Fee (5%)	\$4,004
Feed Nova Scotia Contribution	-\$31,500
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$52,584</b>

## RECOMMENDATION 29b.

# African Nova Scotian & Black Food Justice and Sovereignty



**29.** Develop community infrastructure and projects that **create economic and social benefits** in ANSB (African Nova Scotian and Black) communities.

**29b.** Support the development of an **ANS-led community food hub** that will centralize the storage, processing, marketing, and distribution of ANS-produced food and value-added products.

### *Aligned Recommendations:*

**1c.** Centre racial equity and increase community power in food governance and ensure that the Council reflects diverse perspectives and provides opportunities for communities to lead and influence food action and system change in our food system towards increased food justice and food sovereignty.

**2.** Support the development of an Indigenous Food Governance Body and an **African Nova Scotian Food Policy Council** that operate autonomously from but in collaboration with the Food Council.

**26.** Build African Nova Scotian (ANS) food system governance and ANS-centered policy. This promotes the right to self-governance and sovereignty recognizing the right of ANS communities to define their own food systems.

b. Ensure ANS representation on the proposed Food Council and on Working Groups.

## BACKGROUND

African Nova Scotians are a distinct people with a rich history of prosperity and resilience. They descend from free and enslaved Black Planters, Black Loyalists, Black Refugees, Maroons, and other Black people who inhabited the original 52 land-based Black communities in Mi'kma'ki, Nova Scotia.

However, due to historic and present-day systemic racism and colonialism, African Nova Scotians are faced with inequities in power, resources, and opportunities. Systemic racism causes chronic stress and trauma, resulting in poorer physical and mental health, and creates barriers such as an inability to access educational opportunities, find and keep employment, access health-care services, and find safe housing. Racial inequity is also ingrained in our food system, as demonstrated by the underrepresentation of Black Canadians in our agriculture sectors, lack of Black Canadians in leadership roles within agriculture organizations, and the overrepresentation of Black people in laborious and precarious roles related to agriculture.

Black food sovereignty recognizes these inequities and embraces “the right of Black people to healthy and culturally-appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. It includes their right to define their own food and agriculture systems and to build their own institutions to advance community capacity and resilience for access to food.”<sup>1</sup>

In order to advance African Nova Scotian and Black (ANSB) food justice and sovereignty efforts across the Halifax regional food system, an ANSB Advisory Group was organized to draft a set of recommendations for Part A of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* (pages 61-65). In March of 2023, this ANSB advisory group transitioned into an ANSB Food Sovereignty Working Group. In the summer and fall of 2023, the Working Group undertook a program of community engagement and partnership exploration to inform the development of a set of projects that support ANSB food access, justice, and sovereignty. Several common themes and project ideas emerged, detailed in the What We Heard Report.

Acting on community feedback and expertise, this implementation strategy advances the development of a full time **ANSB Community Food Coordinator position**, alongside the delivery of two key community-identified projects: the (1) **Caja Planter Box Project** and (2) **ANSB Meal Preparation Program**.

This strategy **recommends that the Municipality provide multi-year core funding** for the ANSB Food Coordinator and associated Governance Model. The Coordinator and Advisory Group/ Governance Model will also pursue additional funding and opportunities to expand the work.

**This strategy was written by the ANSB Working Group, with support from the JustFOOD team.**

## INTENDED IMPACT

The creation of an ANSB Community Food Coordinator role and the delivery of the Caja Planter Box Project and ANSB Meal Preparation Program will support food security in ANSB communities and advance ANSB food sovereignty and justice efforts across HRM.

Broadly, the ANSB Community Food Coordinator will collaborate with the Halifax Food Council (HFC) to:

- **Advance ANSB food justice and sovereignty** efforts across the food system;
- **Center racial equity** in food system governance;
- Ensure that the HFC reflects and **prioritizes diverse perspectives**;
- **Increase community power** in food system governance by providing opportunities for communities to lead and influence food action and system change; and
- **Pursue additional funding** and support to enable expansion of the work.

## PROJECT SCOPE

### ANSB Community Food Coordinator

The ANSB Working Group proposes that the ANSB Community Food Coordinator position be hosted by [ONE North End](#) Community Economic Development Society, a Black-led community organization and founding member of the JustFOOD ANSB Advisory Group.

The ANSB Community Food Coordinator will possess an understanding of the ways our food system intersects with systemic racism. The Coordinator will be experienced in writing grants, successfully implementing community-level projects, community engagement, and building collaborative partnerships across organizations.

In year one (2024/25), the ANSB Food Coordinator will:

- Lead the advancement of the **Caja Planter Box Project** and the **ANSB Meal Preparation Program**, priority projects identified through the ANSB Working Group's engagement efforts;
- Explore the creation of a Black Community Food Centre;
- Serve as a member of the HFC advisory circle;
- Build capacity toward the development of an ANSB food governance model; and
- Further develop community partnerships explored by the ANSB Working Group, including partnerships with:
  - The North Grove Community Food Centre,
  - Nova Scotia Community College's (NSCC) Culinary Arts program,
  - Hope Blooms, and
  - Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute.

### Caja Planter Box Project

The Caja planter box project is designed to increase ANS and Black food sovereignty by making gardening more accessible through the efficient use of Caja growing containers.

In order to support ANS and Black food sovereignty, where people of African descent strive to take control over their own food systems while reaping the economic benefits that follow, there must first be acknowledgement of the unique food access challenges faced by these communities, specifically with regards to the ability to grow one's own food.

ANS and Black community members face several unique challenges relating to food production. These difficulties can be attributed to various socioeconomic and historical factors:

- **Limited Access to Green Spaces:** Many areas, particularly those with predominantly Black populations, often lack access to parks and community gardens. This limits the available space for gardening.
- **Land Ownership:** Historically, discriminatory housing and land purchasing practices, combined with gentrification, have restricted Black residents' ability to own land or property, thereby preventing access to growing spaces. The practices have led to Black communities strategically being placed near industrial areas or highways, resulting in poor air quality and soil contamination, which can be detrimental to gardening efforts.
- **Lack of Resources:** Gardening requires tools, seeds, and knowledge. Some community members may face economic barriers that make it challenging to acquire these resources. Furthermore, access to gardening education and resources may be limited, hindering residents from developing the necessary skills for successful gardening.

Many community members are actively working to overcome these barriers by advocating for equitable access to green spaces, engaging in community gardening projects, and promoting sustainable urban agriculture initiatives. However, an online survey circulated by the ANSB Working Group indicated that less than 8% of respondents grow their own food.

The Caja planter box project will:

- Support 47 ANSB community members to grow their own produce and explore afrocentric approaches to growing and preparing food. Each participant will receive a planter box and the appropriate amount of soil.
- Establish an ANSB gardeners support group, facilitated by the ANSB Community Food Coordinator, offering eight sessions where ANSB community members will receive afrocentric gardening advice, and have the opportunity to share their experiences with the Caja planter boxes.
- Run during the spring and summer. Once the growing season is complete and program participants have harvested their crops, they will be invited to register for the ANSB meal preparation program, which will run during the fall and winter months.
- Continue the work of the ANSB Working Group to explore community partnerships and spaces to facilitate the distribution of the Caja planter boxes to participants.

## ANSB Meal Preparation Program

The ANSB Meal Preparation Program will:

- Provide program participants with the opportunity to create healthy afrocentric meals using food they have grown, engage in communal dinners, and learn more about Black food sovereignty through didactic learning activities facilitated by the ANSB Food Coordinator and guest speakers.
- Explore partnership with a local chef to create a 10-12 week program to provide participants with food literacy skills rooted in the ANSB food sovereignty framework. The goal is for the program to be a blend of ANSB history, culture, and flavor, designed to bring the soul-warming and hearty dishes of ANSB heritage to the forefront.

- Advance the work of the ANSB Working Group to explore partnerships with The North Grove and NSCC's Culinary Arts Program. Both of these organizations have commercial kitchen facilities that could host the program, as well as staff that could support facilitation.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Lead:** African Nova Scotian and Black (ANSB) Community Food Coordinator

**African Nova Scotian Community Food Coordinator:** An ANSB Community Food Coordinator will lead projects selected through community engagement and will represent the ANS community as a member of the Halifax Food Council Advisory Circle. The Coordinator will also liaise with the Municipal Food Team and HFC staff, establishing mechanisms for collaboration and mutual support.

**Partners:** ANSB Working Group and One North End

**ANSB Working Group:** There are currently four members of the ANSB Working Group. Once the group has hired an ANSB Community Food Coordinator, the group will transition into an advisory role; providing guidance, engagement, and networking support to help the coordinator achieve objectives. The ANSB Working Group will meet with the ANSB Community Food Coordinator twice monthly for the first year. An engagement budget will continue to fund their participation.

**One North End:** One North End (ONE) will act as the host organization to the ANSB Community Food Coordinator. ONE began as a grassroots community-led organization and, over the past seven years, has worked closely with community food actors (i.e., youth, parents, homeowners, elders, businesses, and nonprofits) in the North End of Halifax and beyond. ONE collaborates with communities, businesses, corporations, non-profits, government, and academia to build collective impact strategies that lead to co-created initiatives. ONE will work closely with the ANSB Working Group to provide work space, mentorship, and connection to their networks for the ANSB Community Food Coordinator through Executive Director, Rodney Small.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The ANSB Community Food Coordinator will report to ONE Senior Management and performance will be evaluated internally by ONE.

The ANSB Community Food Coordinator will prepare annual reports to the HFC detailing activities undertaken, project metrics, and an evaluation of the impact of provided funding. The Halifax FC will include this information in its annual report to Halifax Regional Council.

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

**Steps Completed:**

- Host community engagement events and online survey to inform ANSB Community Food Coordinator role and projects

- Establish preliminary project details and partnerships

**Next Steps:**

- Develop detailed job description for ANS Community Food Coordinator and hire for the position
- Secure formal community partnerships to host planter box project and deliver meal preparation programs
- Order project materials
- Deliver the programs

## BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

The ANSB Food Sovereignty Working Group is requesting a total of **\$105,097.20** over one year to fund the (1) ANSB Community Coordinator role; (2) ANSB Working Group; (3) Caja Planter Box Project; and (4) ANSB Meal Preparation Program. Public Health contributed \$20,000 in 2023 to support the ANSB Working Group and has agreed to carrying these funds over to support the Advisory Group into 2024.

**The total Municipal Ask as \$105,491.05**

Budget Item	Total Cost
Total Compensation for Food Coordinator	\$72,800.00
ONE North End Administrative Fee (10%)	\$7,280.00
ANSB Advisory Group	\$7,600.00
Caja Planter Box Project	\$4,997.20
Meal Preparation Program	\$12,420.00
<i>Preliminary Total</i>	\$105,097.20
EAC Administrative Fee (5%)	\$5,254.85
<i>Total Budget</i>	\$110,352.05
Balance of Public Health 2023 Contribution	-\$4,861.00
<b>Municipal Ask</b>	<b>\$105,491.05</b>

Project specific funding is as follows:

## ANSB Community Food Coordinator

Budget Item	Total Cost
Total Compensation for Food Coordinator	\$72,800.00
ONE North End Administrative Fee (10%)	\$7,280.00
<i>Total Budget</i>	<b>\$80,080.00</b>
Balance of Public Health 2023 Contribution	-\$4,861.00
<b>Municipal Ask</b>	<b>\$75,219.00</b>

## ANSB Advisory Group

The ANSB Advisory Group will consist of four members. The Working Group will be compensated at \$40 per hour (consistent rate throughout JustFOOD development), and will meet for two hours, twice monthly for 12 months.

Budget Item	Total Cost
Compensation	\$7,600.00
<i>Total Budget</i>	<b>\$7,600.00</b>

## Caja Planter Box Project

Each Caja planter box is 74cm x 34cm x 29cm with 57 liter (2 cubic feet) planting volume. The planter boxes cost \$84.00 each and include the Caja planter, aeration screen, watering tube, mulch cover. In addition to purchasing the planter boxes, soil will also need to be purchased. An estimated 47 planter boxes will be distributed to community members.

Budget Item	Cost	HST (15%)	Total Cost
Planter Boxes (X47)	\$3,948.00	\$592.20	\$4537.20
94 cubic feet of soil, delivered	\$400.00	\$60.00	\$460.00
<b>Total Budget</b>			<b>\$4997.20</b>



## Meal Preparation Program

Budget Item	Cost	HST (15%)	Total Cost
Facilitation	\$5,000.00	\$75.00	\$5,075.00
Groceries (\$700 x 10 weeks)	\$7,000.00	—	\$7,000.00
Equipment: take-home storage containers	\$300.00	\$45.00	\$345.00
<b>Total Budget</b>			<b>\$12,420.00</b>

# Community Gardens & Urban Agriculture



*Recommendations 32a.i., 32a.ii., and 32a.vi. (as presented in Part A of the Plan) have been modified upon further consultation with Municipal staff across business units. The revised recommendations are presented here.*

## **32a.i. Community Plots Pilot**

Enable and fund the development of a Community Plots Pilot wherein the Municipality will collaborate with interested communities to increase access to growing space through a Municipally-run, low or no-cost plot rental program. HRM will be responsible for developing, resourcing, and maintaining Community Plots Pilot sites. If successful, this Pilot will inform the development of a permanent Community Plots Program.

## **32a.ii. Urban Agriculture Specialist**

Create and fund an Urban Agricultural Specialist staff position within the Municipality. This staff member will support the development and oversight of urban food production programs and initiatives that strengthen the municipality's food system.

## **32a.vi. Community Garden Grant Program**

Develop a funding stream to support registered community gardens in acquiring resources and infrastructure, implementing onsite changes, and conducting accessibility audits.

*See aligned **Recommendation 17**.*

## **BACKGROUND**

The *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region* is directly informed by community-level engagement and feedback. HRM and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance worked with the public to ensure that community concerns and aspirations were consistently understood, considered, and directly reflected in Plan recommendations. As depicted in the *Summary of Engagement* document, community members identified a need for reduced-barrier food production spaces and tools, including improved access to growing spaces. The single most common action identified through the JustFOOD Action Survey was:

“Increase the number of community gardens and plot allotments in HRM, and provide residents with more spaces to grow food”.

This implementation strategy details three related Plan recommendations that support Municipally-led urban agriculture efforts in HRM, the establishment of a:

- (1) Community Plots Pilot;
- (2) Full-time Urban Agriculture Specialist position; and

(3) Community Garden Grant Program.

**This strategy was prepared in consultation with Parks and Recreation (including Community Developers), HalifACT Water Specialist, and Diversity and Inclusion.**

## INTENDED IMPACT

### 32a.i. Community Plots Pilot

The Community Plots Pilot is intended to **enable community members to participate in urban food production** activities through creation and maintenance of a public, Municipally-run, low or no-cost plot rental program. Participants will receive access to a garden plot; have access to resources such as soil, compost, seeds, and seedlings; and be able to seek guidance or support from the **Urban Agriculture Specialist** throughout the growing season.

The Pilot will be designed to **address barriers to food production experienced by equity-deserving communities**, including inequitable access to growing space. The Urban Agriculture Specialist will collaborate with Community Developers and Diversity and Inclusion to ensure that the Pilot is accessible and effectively responds to community-level needs.

The Community Plots Pilot will not replace the Community Garden Program, but will be a complementary initiative that supports community agriculture for those unable or uninterested in joining a formal community garden. It will be designed to address access barriers and gaps identified in the HRM Community Garden Program, including economic and social barriers that prevent community members from being able to:

- **Form a cohesive and enduring Board** that is responsible for legal and administrative duties such as site plan development, society registration, and agreement renewal;
- **Secure resources or funds** to enable the physical development of a community garden;
- **Commit to long term maintenance** of gardens; and
- Pay individual membership fees.

### 32a.ii. Urban Agriculture Specialist

The Urban Agriculture Specialist will **support the development and administration of food production initiatives** that strengthen the Municipality's knowledge base and capacity to provide opportunities for community-based food production. These initiatives will **promote community-level food access and sovereignty, prioritizing equity-deserving groups and under-served communities**. This member of the new Municipal Food Team at Community Safety will lead the advancement and management of the Community Plots Pilot; support the advancement of the proposed Community Orchard Pilot; and administer the Community Garden Program, in collaboration with regional Community Developers.

In their role, the Urban Agriculture Specialist will:

- Serve as a Municipal and community resource on urban agriculture best practices;
- **Engage with communities** to inform Municipal food production projects and activities;

- Manage and advance relevant food production programs and services across the municipality; and
- **Support equitable participation** in our food system by enabling food production in communities that are most vulnerable to food insecurity and face disproportionately limited access to growing space.

### 32a.vi. Community Gardens Grants Program

Public engagement has demonstrated strong community-level interest in, and need for, a grant stream that resources community gardens, improving the accessibility of the Community Garden Program. The Community Gardens Grants Program will be a source of funding for existing or new gardens participating in [HRM's Community Gardens Program](#). The Grant Program is intended to:

- **Address and reduce barriers to participation** in the Community Garden Program;
- Support more equitable participation in our food system by **enabling food production in communities that are most vulnerable to food insecurity** and face disproportionately limited access to growing space; and
- Support community garden establishment, maintenance, and improvement activities.

Funds may be used for the purchase of resources (such as wood, soil, compost, and fertilizer); infrastructure (such as water barrels or sheds); and community-based educational opportunities and events (such as soil health workshops). The Community Gardens Grants will be designed under similar principles to the new Community Food Grants (**IS 1b.i**), creating a low barrier and flexible grant stream that is responsive to community needs and offers support for application and progress monitoring.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 32a.i. Community Plots Pilot

The proposed **Urban Agriculture Specialist** will be responsible for collaborating with Parks and Recreation and appropriate Community Developers to design and oversee the Community Plots Pilot as well as a monitoring framework that will assess Pilot outcomes and identify areas for improvement.

The following **Municipal supports** will be provided as the Urban Agriculture Specialist develops and considers opportunities for expansion of the Pilot:

- **Site Selection**
  - Parks and Recreation Community Developers, Landscape Architects, Horticulture, and other Municipal staff will support Pilot site selection and connection to community interests and resources; and
  - Diversity and Inclusion staff will support Pilot site selection and related community engagement.

- **Resource Procurement**

- Parks and Recreation, including Horticulture, will support connection to qualified suppliers for Municipal procurement of resources such as soil, compost, and wood; and
- HRM Procurement and Finance will also support resource procurement.

- **Infrastructure**

- Solid Waste will support the design and budgeting of Pilot site composting infrastructure;
- Halifax Water will support identification of water access points for proposed Pilot sites and costing estimates for water hook up installation, if necessary; and
- Parks and Recreation will support negotiations to connect to recreational facility infrastructure, if necessary.

- **Communications**

- HRM Communications Specialists will support the promotion of the Pilot.

### **32a.ii. Urban Agriculture Specialist**

The **Urban Agriculture Specialist will be housed in Community Safety**, reporting directly to the team lead for food security. The Urban Agriculture Specialist will be responsible for:

- Administering the Community Gardens Grant Program, in consultation with Community Developers;
- Co-leading the Community Orchard Pilot in partnership with Horticulture staff; and
- Designing, overseeing, and equitably distributing funds from the Community Garden Grant Program.

In collaboration with Human Resources, internal Municipal partners will support the continued development of the Urban Agriculture Specialist job description and reporting structure.

### **32a.vi. Community Garden Grant Program**

The Urban Agriculture Specialist will develop the Community Gardens Grant Program in consultation with Community Developers, other relevant Parks and Recreation staff, Public Safety, Diversity and Inclusion, Finance, Corporate Communications, and advisors from the Halifax Food Council. This will include development of Terms of References and other supporting documents and processes, including a webpage, selection criteria, fund administration, application supports, performance measurements, and reporting criteria.

The Urban Agriculture Specialist will administer the Community Gardens Grant Program, in consultation with Community Developers. **A review body for grant awarding** will be developed including **staff from Community Safety, Parks and Recreation, Diversity and Inclusion**, as well as representation from the **Halifax Food Council and a Community Garden partner organization**.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### 32a.i. Community Plots Pilot

The success of the Community Plots Pilot will be monitored and evaluated as it progresses, with the goal of informing the development of additional plots and an established program. Community feedback will be used to gauge Pilot accessibility, reach, and satisfaction, among other metrics. Overarchingly, feedback will be used to assess **social, health, and economic benefits to communities and community members**.

Key performance indicators may include but are not limited to:

- Number of community members with plot access;
- Number of new plots established;
- Square meters of growing space introduced;
- Compost production by weight or volume;
- Rainwater harvested by surface area or volume; and
- Community participation in site development.

The Community Plots Pilot design and services will be modified as necessary to best meet community needs.

### 32a.ii. Urban Agriculture Specialist

The role and focus of the Urban Agriculture Specialist may evolve with time, as pilots and programs evolve. The role will be reviewed regularly to ensure that this staff position is optimized to best serve community needs, the priorities of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*, and urban agriculture opportunities and advisory needs within HRM. The metrics for the Community Plots Pilot, Community Orchard Pilot and Community Garden Grants will also serve to measure progress and guide future work.

### 32a.vi. Community Gardens Grant Program

Grant recipients for the Community Garden Grant Program will be required to report on the use of funds and associated outcomes. The Program will include support and standardized measures of progress to support recipients in tracking impact of the funding and reporting on their grants. This reporting will inform the monitoring and evaluation of the Program. Additionally, grant applications will be used to assess needs and gaps in community garden resourcing and inform future reviews and updates to the Community Garden Program.

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

### 32a.i. Community Plots Pilot

#### Steps completed:

- Identify internal Municipal partners to support pilot site selection
- Scope and profile potential pilot sites, in collaboration with internal partners
- Budget and scope resources and related considerations needed for pilot site development

#### Next steps:

- Continue engagement with communities, food system actors, and internal partners to identify high priority candidate sites
- Select one to two initial pilot sites, using community engagement feedback and site selection criteria
- Draft site plans that outline design elements such as plot size and location; pathways; water access points; and compost infrastructure
  - Pilot sites should be designed in consultation with a Municipal accessibility advisor and members of Diversity and Inclusion
- Establish resource procurement plans and commitments
- Using community engagement feedback, further explore social aspects of the Community Plots Pilot. This may include:
  - Advancing methods for community participation in site development
  - Identifying priorities, tools, and supports to ensure equitable access to plots and reduction of barriers
- Establish the application/booking process, criteria, and tools for equitable access to plots
- Prepare the sites for gardening and supply basic infrastructure
- Develop a public facing promotion plan with the support of HRM Communications Specialists
- Publicly launch the Community Plots Pilot
- Match applicants with plots
- Work with gardeners to support planting and maintenance
- Monitor and evaluate progress to identify key learnings for establishment of permanent program

### **32a.ii. Urban Agriculture Specialist**

#### **Steps completed:**

- Host conversations with relevant internal partners in order to best define the relationship between the Urban Agriculture Specialist and Municipal staff (such as Community Developers) that are responsible for related profiles of work
- Draft a preliminary job description for the Urban Agriculture Specialist that outlines the forecasted roles and responsibilities, necessary qualifications and experience, and reporting structure associated with the position

#### **Next steps:**

- Refine and formalize the job description, issue an Organizational Change Approval (OCA), and create the new position
- Post position and hire the Urban Agricultural Specialist
- Monitor the position and revise roles and responsibilities as necessary

### **32a.vi. Community Garden Grant Program**

#### **Steps completed:**

- Host discussions and came to agreement on approach with Parks and Recreation staff responsible for overseeing the Community Garden Program

#### **Next steps:**

- Strike the Grant Review team
- Draft a Terms of Reference document for the Community Garden Grant Program, among other necessary supportive documents
  - Establish grantee eligibility and selection criteria, administration timelines and processes, and develop aids for application and performance measurement
- Develop an intake mechanism and application form
- Launch the Grant
- Review applications and award grants
- Develop an assessment and monitoring strategy to gauge the efficacy of the Program and adjust as needed.
  - Use the applications to determine what activities require funding and how much funding is needed for the Program to be impactful



# BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

## 32a.i. Community Plots Pilot

The total budget for the Community Plots Pilot will be \$35,000 for the establishment and maintenance of the pilot site. An estimated \$5,000 to \$10,000 of this budget will be allocated to water hookup installation, which will serve both plot holders and community members at large. Water access provision will align with recommendations made in the *HRM Parks Washroom and Drinking Fountains Strategy*. An estimated \$10,000 will be allocated to consulting and labour costs associated with the establishment of the pilot site. An estimated \$3,000 will be used to purchase agricultural tools that will be made available for use to plot holders. An estimated \$12,000 will be allocated to necessary infrastructure and landscaping supplies such as wood, soil, compost, landscaping fabric, signage, and fencing. An estimated \$1000 will be allocated to the purchase of seeds and seedlings for gardeners, to reduce barriers to participation. Funding that remains after plot establishment will be allocated to repairs and other maintenance activities.

Budget Item	Cost	HST	Total Cost
Water access	\$10,000	\$1,500.00	\$11,500
Consulting and labour	\$10,000	\$1,500	\$11,500
Tools	\$3,000	\$450	\$3,450
Infrastructure and landscaping supplies	\$12,000	\$1,800	\$13,800
Seeds and plants	\$1,000	\$150	\$1150
<b>Total Budget</b>			<b>\$12,420.00</b>

## 32a.ii. Urban Agriculture Specialist

The Urban Agriculture Specialist has been costed out as a NSGEU 222 Level 8 position, with an **annual cost to the Municipality of \$83,000** including salary and MERCs.

## 32a.vi. Community Garden Grant Program

The total budget allocated for the first year of the Community Garden Grant Program is **\$40,000**.

This budget value is informed by conversations with Community Developers, Horticulture, and a HalifACT Water Specialist. It accounts for various activities and associated costs such as water hook up installation, accessibility infrastructure development or design, site expansion, compost construction, and rain barrel purchases.

Although the need for Community Garden funding has been identified by Community Developers and throughout community engagement, it is difficult to estimate how great this need is across the existing 26 current community gardens and to anticipate needs as new gardens develop. **Program evaluation** will include identification of activities that grantees are looking to fund and the total value of funding applications. These assessments and values will **inform budget setting for the Program in future years**.



**39. Improve and expand infrastructure that links buyers to sellers.** This will build social cohesion and trust, support cultural exchange, and ensure sustainable livelihoods.

- a. Continue to **support the development of the *Halifax Regional Food Hub*** and provincially supported community food networks, creating centralized infrastructure to store, process, market, and distribute local food to serve HRM.

## BACKGROUND

By supporting local food-processing and distribution options, municipalities can shorten food-supply chains. This support for locally-driven activity helps to ensure a sustainable, fair, reliable, and efficient supply and distribution of food into, out of, and within the region. Shorter supply chains are also more resistant to disruptions, increasing the overall resilience of a food system.

A **food hub** is a centralized location or organization that serves as an intermediary between local food producers/processors (e.g., farmers, ranchers, and food artisans) and consumers (e.g., retailers, restaurants, institutions, and individual customers). Food hubs are designed to facilitate the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of locally produced food products. They play a crucial role in strengthening regional food systems, shortening supply chains, and promoting local and sustainable food activities.

The [Halifax Regional Food Hub Co-operative \(Hub\)](#) is an active and emerging project that seeks to build and strengthen Nova Scotia's local food system by connecting local producers throughout mainland Nova Scotia to wholesale buyers in Halifax, Dartmouth, and adjacent communities. The Hub will provide services that include aggregation, storage, online ordering and payment processing, order fulfillment and delivery, and a rentable commercial kitchen. Wholesale buyers will include community organizations, institutions, and independently-owned food businesses.

## INTENDED IMPACT

By supporting local producers, building Nova Scotia's local food infrastructure, and creating efficient channels for food distribution, the Halifax Regional Food Hub will **strengthen the regional food system and increase Nova Scotia's economic resiliency.**

The Hub is intended to:

- **Support local producers** by providing local farmers and food producers with access to larger and more diverse markets. By aggregating and distributing products from multiple producers, the Hub will support small and mid-sized farms to reach a wider customer base.
- **Shorten supply chains** by reducing the number of intermediaries in the supply chain, food hubs can make local foods more affordable and accessible. When consumers are able to

purchase directly from local producers, they are more likely to choose local products.

- **Increase local consumption** by bridging gaps between local food producers and wholesale buyers, increasing consumer access and ability to purchase local products.
- **Increase economic resilience** by keeping food dollars within the local economy. It may also create jobs in food distribution, processing, and marketing.

## PROJECT SCOPE

The Hub will support a range of activities, including:

- **Aggregation:** The Hub will collect products from multiple producers, allowing them to reach a broader market than they might on their own;
- **Distribution:** The Hub will facilitate the efficient movement of food from producers to various points of sale or consumption, reducing the burden on individual producers;
- **Marketing and Promotion:** The Hub may assist in promoting or marketing the products it distributes, helping local producers gain visibility and access to a wider customer base;
- **Storage and Processing:** The Hub will offer facilities for storage (dry, cold, and frozen) and will provide access to a rentable commercial kitchen and
- **Market Access:** The Hub will connect local and regional food producers with a variety of buyers, including grocery stores, restaurants, schools, and food service institutions, making it easier for these buyers to source local and fresh products.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This Project has been advanced by a working group composed of leading local food actors and organizations, in collaboration with (1) Flourish Community Development Co-operative, a consulting team of community economic development experts and food systems expertise, and (2) municipal and provincial governments. The Hub has been incorporated as a nonprofit co-operative and is led by a founding board composed of the original working group. Members of the co-operative include:

- Feed Nova Scotia;
- Halifax Food Policy Alliance;
- Mobile Food Market;
- Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia;
- Nourish Nova Scotia; and
- Novalea Kitchen and Market.

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

### Steps Completed:

- Establish a “minimal viable” Hub, governance model, operation principles, market analysis, and an implementation plan
  - Additional details on the Business Plan can be found in the [Executive Summary](#)
  - A “Social Business Model Canvas for Halifax Food Hub” is detailed in Appendix A of the [Halifax Food Hub Final Report](#)
- Begin recruitment for a general manager, who will lead the expansion of the co-op and implementation of the business plan
- Secure funding to support business planning and human resources

### Next Steps:

- Secure funding for a manager and standing up of the Hub
- Hire a manager to lead implementation of the business plan and expand the Co-op
- Establish a facility for local food aggregation, storage, marketing, processing, and distribution
- Form co-op networks of small to medium mainland Nova Scotia food producers, boosting food sovereignty
- Create a co-op network of HRM buyers (e.g., nonprofits, institutions, and commercial buyers)
- Expand market access for HRM-based nonprofits, institutions, and commercial buyers
- Partner with nonprofits to enhance local food access and food security
- Continue to explore alternative funding sources for the implementation of the business plan and standing up of the Hub

## BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

It is anticipated that a **funding or in-kind contribution ask will come to HRM in Fiscal 2024/25** as part of the projected \$1.5 million budget for year 1 operations. Funding will also be sought from Federal and Provincial governments, and other major funders. HRM's Business Parks have been identified as suitable locations for the Hub due to the scale of land and buildings, existing infrastructure, and ease of access.

# RECOMMENDATION 45b.

## HRM Emergency Food Response Playbook



45b. Develop an emergency food plan with funding and resources for emergency responses. In this work, develop partnerships and options for the storage, transportation, and equitable distribution of food during crises.

*Aligned recommendation:*

45. Develop an emergency food program. This program will help coordinate efforts to increase the resilience of local food systems to climate change and food-supply shortages, particularly in those areas and communities most vulnerable to climate change impacts and breaks in the supply chain.

**See aligned IS 45b.ii:** HRM Community Food Distribution Pilot.

## BACKGROUND

There are significant knowledge gaps regarding HRM's emergency preparedness and capacity to be self-sustaining in times of emergency or in response to supply chain disruptions. Emergency food planning research and conversations with experts, Municipal staff, and community organizations have highlighted the need to develop foundational emergency food response tools that address and mitigate these gaps.

This **status update** describes the ongoing development of an **emergency food playbook for the Halifax region**. An emergency food playbook is a document or a set of guidelines that outlines resources, responses, roles and responsibilities, and best practices for addressing food-related challenges during times of emergency. It is anticipated that the HRM Emergency Food Playbook will detail scenario-specific emergency food responses, the “triggers” for these responses, and how emergency responders, the community, and other partners will be involved. The Playbook will advance understanding of hazards, vulnerabilities, resources, assets, and partnerships towards increased emergency food preparedness.

Activation of an **effective and flexible emergency response** requires a high degree of collaboration and coordination across the food system. The Emergency Food Playbook will therefore be developed by HRM's Emergency Management Office (EMO), with support from the Municipal Food Team, HalifACT, Halifax Food Council, other levels of government, community organizations, and businesses. **Community-level partnerships are crucial to this work**, as community groups are uniquely attuned to nuanced community needs; hold established, trust-based relationships with community members; and are equipped to provide rapid, targeted assistance, ensuring that resources and support are directed where they are most needed.

At present, **EMO continues to develop and finetune tools that will support the creation of the Emergency Food Playbook and inform decision-making** including:

- [The Hazards, Risks, and Vulnerabilities Assessment \(HRVA\)](#) project, begun in Spring of 2023 and undergoing community engagement to identify hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities. The HRVA will analyze potential negative outcomes during emergency events, such as areas that are prone to flooding, have poor cellular coverage, lack egress routes, have coastal erosion, or have experienced historical emergencies. The objectives of the HRVA are to increase community and organizational resilience to climate, technological, human and conflict-related hazards, by informing and influencing decision-making and project-planning. This includes identifying critical infrastructure (such as food resources) and risk mitigation measures, enhancing community awareness, and providing education.
- [The SATURN Refresh Project](#), currently underway to update the emergency situational awareness management operations tool set, which functions to assess events and trigger appropriate responses.

While the HRVA will help to identify critical food infrastructure, risks, and vulnerabilities, and SATURN will support appropriate Municipal-level emergency responses, there is a gap in understanding and negotiating the role of communities in supporting emergency food responses. The Emergency Food Playbook aims to address this gap.

To support EMO in the development of the Playbook, the JustFOOD team has developed an **Emergency Food Partners Survey** and hosted conversations to identify community-level capacity and interest in supporting emergency food responses. The survey is based on best practices in emergency food and community resilience planning, notably John Hopkin's [Food System Resilience Guide for Municipalities](#) and the City of Calgary's [Food Resilience Program](#).

**This Implementation Strategy has been prepared in collaboration with Emergency Management, Environment and Climate Change (HalifACT), and Legal Services staff.**

## INTENDED IMPACT

The Emergency Food Playbook presents a way to **unite emergency food response efforts across governments, organizations, and communities**, increasing collective preparedness. The playbook is intended to:

- **Build local food system resilience by increasing collective ability** to respond to food system disruptions more efficiently and effectively;
- **Improve regional knowledge** and understanding of food system vulnerabilities, strengths, and adaptive capacities; and
- **Create more equitable and just food systems** by developing resilience strategies that are grounded in community.

## PROJECT SCOPE

The JustFOOD team developed the preliminary **Emergency Food Partners Survey** to support EMO's emergency food planning for the 2023 hurricane season (see at end of Update). Focus was

given to key community food partners in six communities with higher rates of food insecurity and with greater vulnerability to extreme weather events. Geographic needs were considered by including actors operating across the region. These conversations gauged interest in partnership; resources for emergency food prep, preservation, and distribution; and potential roles and responsibilities during emergencies.

The Emergency Food Partners Survey for the 2023 hurricane season focused on representative community partners in the following categories:

- Community-based food organizations;
- Regional/Provincial Food Distributors; and
- Commercial Food Trucks.

The survey was built using HRM's Shape Your City website. The survey is comprised of four parts:

1. **Organizational information:** location, services, and contact lists
2. **Internal emergency planning:** organizational policies, previous experience with emergency support
3. **Resources and capacities:** facilities, storage space, staff and volunteer power, and languages spoken
4. **Unique food system roles:** specific responses to community needs

Potential food system roles for community actors include:

- Food preparation;
- Food distribution and delivery;
- Food supply, storage and stockpiling;
- Communication with community members and other community actors; and
- Insight into community needs.

Work is underway to refine the survey and create tools to craft responses into easy-to-use partner profiles that EMO can have on hand to support emergency responses. The preliminary survey is attached to this status update.

The JustFOOD team used the survey responses to create a suite of **Community Partner Profiles**. These profiles offer snapshots of emergency contacts and **community-partner resources, roles, responsibilities, and commitments** that could be called upon as needed during emergencies. Partner profiles will be used to support EMO in negotiating "**Supplier Agreements**" with **emergency food partners** (EFPs). Supplier agreements will proactively confirm EFP roles and responsibilities during times of emergency, facilitating cohesive response strategies. During an emergency event, expectations will have already been established, allowing EFPs to respond quickly, without confusion or duplication of efforts. EFPs would receive compensation for use of funds and resources directed to supporting the Municipal emergency response.

Formal partnerships have not yet been established, however the initial round of surveying demonstrated significant interest in partnership with the Municipality from all actors. Supplier

agreements will be integrated into the Emergency Food Playbook to ensure that community partners and resources are factored into decision-making and available for an efficient and helpful emergency response.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Lead:** HRM Emergency Management Office will lead the development of the Emergency Food Playbook, provide staffing resources to expand the Emergency Food Partners Survey, and pursue additional Supplier Agreements. In this process, EMO will **gain a better understanding of community partners' capacity to lead community-based emergency responses.**

**Partners:** Municipal Food Team and Halifax Food Council

- **The Municipal Food Team** and members of the **Halifax Food Council** will support EMO by providing food system expertise and connection to best practices. The Municipal Food Team and the Halifax Food Council will also support identification of and relationship building with potential EFPs.
  - The new **Community Food and Climate Specialist** will support the evolution of the Emergency Food Partners Survey, ongoing outreach, and creation of Supplier Agreements, while continuing to work closely with ECC (HalifACT) and EMO to increase understanding of the connection between food and climate; and
  - The **Emergency Food Truck Coordinator** will operate the Emergency Food Truck during times of emergency, provide expertise on community food distribution and community food partners, and liaise with [Second Harvest](#) (an organization that has committed to diverting surplus food at times of emergency to support emergency food response; [see IS 45b.ii](#)).
- **HRM's Legal Services** have committed to assisting with the development of Supplier Agreements and other legal support, as needed.
- The **Halifax Food Asset Map** will provide data on critical infrastructure and food resources. In particular, 211 data can be used to identify potential EFPs ([see IS 6a](#)).

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The following metrics will gauge the impact of the Emergency Food Partners Survey and EFP Profiles:

- Number of surveys completed and profiles developed;
  - This metric demonstrates the scale and scope of initial relationship building activities and **increased knowledge of potential roles and responsibilities held by community partners.**



- The **Shape Your City** Survey platform will be used to track:
  - Number and type of Supplier Agreements negotiated; and
  - Impact of community partners providing emergency food support in partnership with HRM during an event.
    - This metric could include the number and format of events a partner has been involved in, the form of support provided to community, as well as number of participants, number of meals served, and weight of food distributed or stored.
- Development of the Emergency Food Playbook and incorporation of the Supplier Agreements and resources/relationships with EFP into emergency responses.

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

### Steps Completed:

- Develop Preliminary Emergency Food Partner Survey
- Complete 11 community partner profiles and confirm interest in partnership with EMO
- Pursue Supplier Agreements with 11 EFPs interviewed for 2023 hurricane season
- Expand the Emergency Food Partners Survey to reach other communities and organizations

### Next Steps:

- Develop and finalize Supplier Agreements with 11 EFPs
- Develop capacity to advance continued EFP identification and profiling
- Use Supplier Agreements to develop fuller strategies for the Emergency Food Response Playbook

## BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

The new **Community Food and Climate Specialist** will support this work, as they advance other Municipally-led food initiatives and policies. Currently, this role is housed at the Ecology Action Centre (EAC) and is covered under the 2023/24 Contribution Agreement, funded jointly from Community Safety and ECC (HalifACT). This role will transition to a new FTE at HRM in fiscal 2024/25. Four months of this position are allocated under the Contribution Agreement and additional surplus funds from the overlap in fiscal 2024/25 will cover the balance of the position.

The total cost for this role in 2024/25 will be \$56,000, the annual costs for this position will total \$83,000 as it transitions to an HRM FTE role NSGEU 222 Level 8.

There is **no additional Municipal budget ask associated with this Update**. Advancement of EFP relationship-building will be supported by current budgets.

## 2023 Hurricane Season: Potential Emergency Food Partner Survey

### ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

- 1 Notes from intro discussion
- 2 Name of organization
- 3 Address of primary location
- 4 Operating hours
- 5 What Community Food Services Do You Provide?  
Select all that apply: Food Supply, Food Literacy, Food Distribution, Food Preparation; Program, Service Delivery; and Other (please specify)
- 6 Please provide a primary contact who could also be available during off-hours (provide name, role, phone number, email)
- 7 Please provide a secondary contact who could also be available during off-hours (provide name, role, phone number, email)

### EMERGENCY PLANNING

- 8 Does your organization do planning for emergencies (formal policy, guidelines, etc)?  
Select all that apply: Power outage plan; Evacuation plan; Extreme heat plan; None; Other (please specify)
- 9 Does your emergency planning involve food considerations?
- 10 Are you willing to share this plan with us?
- 11 Has your organization ever supported an emergency response in the past (ex. COVID-19, Hurricane Dorian, Hurricane Fiona)? If yes, please describe the role you played (ex. resources provided, activities you participated in, etc.)
- 12 Do you have any formal or informal relationships with other organizations around emergency response (ex. Agreements to share resources, strong communication channels, similar client base, etc.)? Please describe these relationships

### EMERGENCY FOOD RESOURCES

- 13 Do you stockpile any food? If yes, please describe what type of food and provide an estimate of how many people it could feed for how many days.  
For the purpose of determining “days of food” in a community, a day of food is the total number of people to be fed multiplied by the standard individual consumption rate of one pound of food per day (approximately 1600 calories).
- 14 Do you have, or have access to, a generator or back-up power?
- 15 Do you have an established plan for what you would do with food if there was an extended power outage?
- 16 What resources does your facility have (or have access to) that could support food preparation?  
Select all that apply: commercial kitchen; non-commercial kitchen; commercial fridge; BBQs; microwaves; hotplates; Other (please specify)

- 17 What resources does your facility have (or have access to) that could support food distribution? Select all that apply: vehicle(s); refrigerated vehicles; boxes, hampers, coolers, etc; storage space; larger infrastructure like loading bay, pallet jacks, forklifts, etc. Other (please specify)
- 18 What resources does your facility have (or have access to) that could support food preservation? Select all that apply: cold storage (fixed- fridges, freezers, etc.); cold storage (portable- coolers, insulated bags, etc.); icepacks; Other (please specify)
- 19 Do you have external outlets or heavy gauge extension cord that could be used to run a refrigerated vehicle?
- 20 Approximately how many staff members could you call on to support your emergency work?
- 21 Do any of your staff/volunteers speak languages other than English? What languages?
- 22 Approximately how many volunteers could you call on to support your emergency work?
- 23 Do you have staff/volunteers that can drive? How many?
- 24 Do you have staff/volunteers that are food safety/food handling certified? How many?
- 25 Do you have staff/volunteers that are physically able to lift heavier objects?

#### COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE & EMERGENCY FOOD ROLE

- 26 What are the unique food needs and vulnerabilities in your community?
- 27 How might your organization's knowledge of the community support emergency food response and those most vulnerable to extreme weather events? Select all that apply: connected to home-bound residents; connected to people with disabilities; connected to seniors; connected to people for whom english is a second language; connected to newcomers; connected to community agencies who work with vulnerable populations; Other (please specify)
- 28 What do you think your key role and responsibilities could be in an emergency food response?
- 29 Is there anything missing (infrastructure, equipment, funding, people power, etc.) that limits your ability to support the community during an emergency?
- 30 Do you have any questions, concerns or limitations with partnering with HRM in an emergency?
- 32 Is there anything else you'd like to add or that you think we should be considering as part of emergency food planning?

#### CLOSING

THANK-YOU for taking the time to provide us with all this valuable information. We will be sharing this with our Emergency Management team, this valuable information will only be used internal to our emergency planning and will not be shared. We might be contacting you for additional info or to talk about an agreement. You also might be contacted by EM staff if needed during an acute emergency.

# RECOMMENDATION 45b.ii.

## HRM Community Food Distribution Pilot



45b.ii Identify, describe, and commit essential infrastructure for the procurement, storage, preparation, and distribution of food supplies such as kitchen facilities with generators, food and refrigerated trucks, and community spaces that will be open during emergencies.

See aligned IS 45b *HRM Emergency Food Playbook*

### BACKGROUND

As our climate continues to change, extreme weather events will become more frequent and severe; and prolonged power outages will continue to result in substantial food spoilage and loss, limited ability to prepare food at the household level, and the exacerbation of pre-existing food access issues. Supply chain vulnerabilities only compound these climate-related disruptions, as demonstrated by the well-documented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food access and the wider spectrum of food system activities.

In 2021, in response to an established need for emergency food infrastructure and as a direct result of consultations with vulnerable communities during past storm events, HalifACT purchased a **refrigerated food truck**, also known as a “reefer truck”. Due to supply chain issues, the Truck did not arrive until 2022. However, it is now ready for emergency deployment. The rationale for the Truck purchase was that it be mobilized into communities to **support food distribution, preparation, and preservation during emergencies**, and be available as a **resource for community food organizations during non-emergency times**.

The Truck specifications include the following:

- **Size:** The truck box measures approximately 88” wide x 186” long and has racking installed.
- **Refrigeration:** The refrigeration/freezer component can operate independently of the truck and can be plugged into an electrical receptacle. The truck has a 30 amp plug that can be plugged into outlets at charging sites.
  - The transportation of heated food was explored, powering heating devices would exceed the truck’s amperage
  - Solar panels to power the refrigeration system were explored, but were determined to not be feasible due to the power requirements for refrigeration.
  - Options for sustainable energy use at plug-in locations are also being explored.
- **Storage:** The truck is currently stored at HRM’s Emergency Management location on Mount Hope in Dartmouth East. As the Pilot evolves and operations are better understood, the storage location of the Truck may change.

This implementation strategy details the “**Halifax Community Food Distribution Pilot**” where, during times of crisis, the Emergency Food Truck Coordinator will use the Truck to support **Municipal emergency responses**, such as the storage and distribution of perishable food and other community supports. During non-emergency times, the Truck Coordinator will maximize use of the Truck to support **food transportation and distribution at the community level**, in partnership with trusted community food organizations.

**This Strategy has been prepared in collaboration with Municipal Emergency Management, Environment and Climate Change (HalifACT), and Human Resources staff, as well as Second Harvest and community food distribution partners.**

## EVIDENCE OF NEED

### Emergency Use:

Following Hurricanes Dorian and Fiona, the Municipality and community service providers saw an increased demand and need for food-related services. Prolonged power outages resulted in significant food loss for both organizations and community members, with limited infrastructure to support food preservation and distribution. Communities with existing food insecurity issues and gaps in food infrastructure are the most heavily impacted and vulnerable to emergencies that further tax a vulnerable food system. Emergency events that have impacted food insecure communities have seen higher losses of precious and often irreplaceable food stores and increased need for food access; in comparison, events that have impacted more food secure communities have demonstrated increased resilience in food preservation and access.

Previous emergencies have highlighted the need for an **emergency response strategy** that effectively uses the Municipal refrigerated truck and associated cold storage to address resultant issues of food preservation/access, prioritizing food insecure and vulnerable communities.

### Non-emergency Use:

Consultations with community food organizations (i.e. Feed Nova Scotia, Nourish Nova Scotia, Mobile Food Market, and the Loaded Ladle) and the Community Safety Business Unit have informed how the reefer truck can be used to support food distribution and access during non-emergency times.

The initial proposal was to create a calendar and agreements to enable community partners to use the reefer truck to support their food programs and services. Upon engaging with community partners, they identified **that lack of people power and capacity to take on additional services** is the major barrier to community food programs, not lack of vehicles and other transportation options. Although food distribution capacity exists within larger-scale community organizations such as Feed Nova Scotia, consultation has indicated a significant gap in available services, people power and capacity to support the collection and distribution of smaller scale food deliveries and donations. This Pilot, the hiring of Emergency Food Truck Coordinator, and the relationship with Second Harvest have been designed to address this gap through providing services that connect community-based food distribution partners with food, so said partners are able to focus their efforts on delivery of programs.

## INTENDED IMPACT

The “HRM Community Food Distribution Pilot” will **enhance the movement of food** in our Region and **support food distribution programs**.

- During **emergencies and recovery**, the Municipality will use the Truck to **distribute food, support food preparation, and prevent food loss**.
- During **non-emergency times**, the Coordinator will use the Truck to **supply community-based food distribution partners with food**, in partnership with Second Harvest. Partners will also be provided with access to the Truck to support their programs.

This Pilot will **strengthen Municipal relationships** with community-based groups, while **building the capacity** of these organizations to effectively support community-level food distribution and emergency food responses. It will also **build Municipal understanding of community resources** that are crucial for both emergency and food systems planning.

## PROJECT SCOPE

The funding and relationships are in place to commence the Pilot as soon as possible, following the hiring of the Coordinator. Work over the next year will focus on launching and promoting the Pilot, monitoring its uptake and functionality, and evaluating its overarching impact and relevance. This will inform decision-making on the value of shifting from a Pilot to an established program as well as budget setting for 2025/26. This Pilot also advances the development of the **HRM Emergency Food Playbook (See IS 45b)** through building Municipal and community partner knowledge, collective planning, and capacity for emergency food responses.

### Coordination

An **Emergency Food Truck Coordinator (Coordinator) position** has been established within the Community Safety Business Unit to advance the Pilot. This position will facilitate the **connection and transport of food supply** from regional businesses and organizations to HRM-based community organizations. The Coordinator will manage the use of the Truck, including the **coordination and scheduling of its use by community organizations**. Additional details on the Coordinator role can be found in the accompanying *JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan* Part B Staff Report.

This Pilot will be supported by a new partnership with Canada’s largest food rescue charity [Second Harvest](#), wherein **Second Harvest will assist HRM to monitor and coordinate food supply and community demand**. The Second Harvest food rescue app is a trusted online application used by a well-established network of food suppliers and not-for-profits that require food. Second Harvest also has experience distributing food during emergency situations. Second Harvest will support the match-making of supply and demand to support distribution by the Truck Coordinator. This support is being provided without cost. In exchange, Second Harvest will advance their mandate of food (re)distribution and reduction of food loss. Second Harvest outlines their support for the Pilot and emergency food responses in the letter following this strategy.

## Emergency Use:

During emergency responses and recovery, the Coordinator may be called upon to provide knowledge and connection to community food distribution partners as well as assist with the distribution of emergency food supports. Emergency Management Office (EMO) will determine the conditions under which the Coordinator will be called into emergencies and the role that they will play.

The following roles have been proposed for the Truck during times of emergency, with additional roles likely forthcoming as the Truck is used:

- Distribution of perishable food, meals, and hampers;
- Distribution of supports for prolonging the life of food (e.g., ice packs and coolers) and equipment for food preparation (e.g., microwaves and barbecues); and
- Movement of perishable food to and from cold storage.

## Non-emergency Use:

During non-emergency times, not-for-profit community food partners will use the Truck to (re)distribute food, thereby increasing food access and reducing food loss and waste while simultaneously strengthening community connections.

The following roles have been proposed for the Truck during non-emergency times:

- Coordination of supply and demand wherein community organizations are able to source surplus food and distribute it to community members or partner organizations with identified need;
- Transport of food from community organization preparation and processing sites (e.g., licensed community kitchens) to designated recipients (e.g., schools); and
- Regular transport or pick up of food from charitable food donors (e.g., farmers markets or other food retailers) to community organizations.

Non-emergency use of the refrigerated truck will further support the Actor Profiling component of the Emergency Food Response Playbook (**see IS 45b**). Actor Profiling advances the (1) development of formal partnerships with community-based organizations and businesses and (2) identification of specific food system roles and responsibilities they can provide in partnership with the Municipality during emergency responses.

## Scheduling:

The Truck will primarily be operated by the Coordinator with scheduled times for direct use by community organizations. This would support the maximization of the truck for community use, freeing up the Coordinator to focus on logistics and Pilot efficacy.

**The Pilot nature of this project is intended to allow for ongoing assessment and modification of scheduling needs based around food supply and demand.**

However, the initial suggested schedule is as follows:

- 2 days a week dedicated for Community Partner use.
- 3 days a week dedicated to the movement of food by the truck Coordinator.
  - Use will likely occur during afternoon and evening hours due to most surplus food becoming available after regular business hours.
- All scheduling will be canceled during an emergency to shift to response and recovery.

To schedule community use, an online calendar will be developed indicating Truck availability. Community organizations will be pre-approved through Agreements outlining conditions of use and will then request to book the Truck. The Coordinator will review booking requests. Agreements will be developed with Legal Services and include requirements such as licensing, insurance, and completion of [HRM Driver's Inspection & Checklist](#).

The Pilot will also explore additional ways to support community use of the Truck including, but not limited to:

- Providing access to Municipally discounted fuel to reduce operation costs for community food distribution programs.
- Enabling the Coordinator drive the Truck on the behalf of partner organizations so they don't have to supply a driver and meet the terms of the Agreements, enabling focus on program delivery. This would be conditional on the availability of the Coordinator and would be secondary to delivery of the Pilot.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Lead:** HRM

**Community Safety:** The Coordinator will be hired under Community Safety and report to the lead of the **Municipal Food Team** for the non-emergency response community food distribution components of this Pilot. **Emergency Management** will direct emergency response use of the Truck and role of the Coordinator.

**Environment and Climate Change (HalifACT):** The Coordinator and Municipal Food Team will provide regular updates on the Pilot to support collaborations towards climate change adaptation and knowledge sharing on the connection between climate change and food.

**Partners:** The Coordinator will be tasked with building relationships with community food actors. Initial conversations with the following actors have confirmed interest and a need for support with food distribution:

- Feed Nova Scotia (provincial);
- Mobile Food Market (regional);
- Loaded Ladle (central);



- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (central and provincial); and
- Community Fridges / Pantries (regional).

**Second Harvest** will support the Pilot and emergency responses through access to their [Food Rescue platform](#); direct connections with suppliers, opportunities, and not-for-profits; as well as ongoing advice and collaboration towards a more effective Pilot and potential long term program.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### Emergency Use

EMO will track Truck usage during emergency responses and recovery using the following metrics:

- Form and volume of food supplies and supports distributed or preserved;
- Communities served;
- Form of community utilization of emergency supplies and supports; and
- Evolving uses of the Truck and other metrics as it is used for emergency responses to inform evaluation and future programs.

### Non-Emergency Use

During non-emergency times, the Truck will be used to support community food distribution.

The Municipal Food Team (led by the Truck Coordinator) will track the following:

- Food redistribution through partnership with Second Harvest, including:
  - Quantity of food rescued or (re)distributed; and
  - The monetary value of (re)distributed food.
- The number, type, and location of community food actors providing food, as well as the community-based nonprofits receiving food, to assess geographic food surplus and demand trends throughout HRM; and
- Frequency and form of Truck utilization by community partners in service of the Pilot.

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

### Steps Completed:

- Enable HRM Refrigerated Truck for active use
- Approve Emergency Food Truck Coordinator position

- Create job description
- Begin to actively seek candidates

**Next Steps:**

- Hire the Emergency Food Truck Coordinator
- Incorporate Truck into foodrescue.ca as a delivery option and identify other opportunities for food re-distribution with Second Harvest
- Establish scheduling commitments and create a booking calendar to organize Truck availability and community access options
- Launch and promote the Pilot
- Develop food distribution plans with community organizations
- Create an Agreement of Use for community use of the truck
- Evaluate uptake and impact of the Truck to inform evaluation and decision-making on establishment of a program and ongoing resourcing.

## BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Due to the following, there is no additional budget requested for this Pilot:

- The Truck is already purchased through Climate Change Capital funding from the HalifACT Projects Account and operations/maintenance are accounted for in Emergency Management’s budget.
- Community Safety will fund the use of the truck for the community distribution component of the Pilot, including the Coordinator role, fuel, maintenance, and supplies. Ongoing funding into 2025/26 is dependent on evaluation results and approval to establish this a long term program.
- Usage during emergencies will continue to be funded through Emergency Management’s emergency funding streams.

Project costs:

Budget Item	Cost	HST	Total Cost
Emergency Food Truck Coordinator	\$63,381	—	\$63,381
<b>Total Annual Budget</b>			<b>\$63,381</b>

## SECOND HARVEST LETTER OF SUPPORT

November 10, 2023

Dear Mayor Savage and Halifax Regional Council

On behalf of Second Harvest Canada, we are writing to indicate our support for the Halifax Food Distribution Pilot and our willingness to partner with the Halifax Regional Municipality to support emergency food distribution. The use of HRM's Emergency Food Truck to assist community food organizations in HRM in rescuing surplus food from local businesses will contribute to a more resilient and less wasteful food system. During previous prolonged power outages and emergency events, Second Harvest is often contacted by businesses and organizations to rescue food that they can't use due to closures. We are committed to working with HRM's Emergency Management and Municipal Food Team to explore redistributing this food in support of emergency response and relief efforts.

As the largest food rescue organization in Canada, Second Harvest works across the supply chain from farm to retail to capture surplus food before it ends up unnecessarily in landfill and negatively impacts our environment. Last year, we recovered 74.87 million pounds of nutritious, unsold food—focusing on protein, dairy, and produce—and redistributed it to a broad network of community organizations across the country.

One of our major barriers when rescuing food is the limited access to refrigerated vehicles to safely transport large quantities of refrigerated and frozen goods. The HRM truck would allow more community organizations more timely access to these opportunities when they present themselves and for additional communities to benefit from surplus food rescue. This truck will especially benefit smaller organizations that would otherwise not have the capacity to access and transport this food, getting much needed support to more vulnerable neighbourhoods, and helping to address the issue of “food deserts”.

This proposed project would have a major impact on reducing food insecurity in Nova Scotia. Without a fleet of our own in the region, this initiative could play a crucial role in exceeding the nearly 2 million pounds of food Second Harvest rescued in Nova Scotia during our last fiscal year. Further, Second Harvest's existing network of community partners will be an asset to the municipality by allowing the Food Distribution Pilot and emergency food responses to tap into our existing distribution infrastructure, reducing resource burdens on the municipality. The in-kind exchange of HRM's Truck and Coordinator with Second Harvest's knowledge and network mobilizes shared resources towards meeting food needs in both emergency and non-emergency times.

We are excited about the potential of this partnership and are looking forward to collaborating with the Halifax Regional Municipality and the JustFOOD Action Team on increasing access to food for those in need.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Kind regards,

Michael Hardy

Operations Manager (Atlantic Canada)

(506) 429-4212

michaelh@secondharvest.ca

**The original signed version stored in Municipal Food Team records**

# RECOMMENDATION 56b.

## Vermicomposting Pilot



56b. **Explore a vermiculture pilot** to provide a limited number of free worm composting bins to community members along with worms, bedding, and education.

*Aligned recommendation:*

**17.** Use Municipal facilities and assets to offer food programs, grow food, and support public food infrastructure.

## BACKGROUND

Food waste recommendations are included in the *JustFOOD Action Plan* in recognition that food is a precious resource and to promote the importance of sustainable management and reduction through recovery, redistribution, and effective composting.

HRM currently diverts approximately 53, 000 tonnes of organic waste from landfills each year through the provision of composting programs, support for [backyard composting](#) practices, and the [Master Composter Recycler](#) program.

The *JustFOOD Action Plan* can increase awareness about the benefits of household and community-level composting by leveraging existing HRM programs and collaborating with HRM Solid Waste. The benefits of household and community-level composting include:

- Reduced food waste sent to compost facilities or landfills;
- Decreased costs of transporting organic waste to composting facilities; and
- Production of compost that can be used by the community to support the growing of food.

This strategy advances a **Vermicomposting Pilot**, delivered by HRM Solid Waste, wherein a limited number of free worm composting bins are provided to community members, along with worms, bedding, and education. Vermicomposting is a **practical way to participate in year-round household composting**. It uses earthworms housed in closed containers to quickly break down household food waste into high-quality, nutrient rich soil. Providing vermicompost training and kits will increase the capacity of residents to engage in household and community composting.

**This Strategy has been developed in consultation with HRM Solid Waste.**

## INTENDED IMPACT

The intended impact of the Pilot is to **increase the capacity of residents to engage in year-round composting** in their homes and communities through providing residents with access to vermicomposting supplies and training. The Pilot will leverage existing Municipal programs and facilities to support distribution and training. It will also leverage JustFOOD's existing networks and partnerships to increase the reach and impact of vermicomposting workshops and training.

Workshops and supplies will be **offered free of charge to reduce barriers** to learning about and engaging in vermicomposting.

## PROJECT SCOPE

This Pilot will be planned, implemented, and evaluated in 2024. Workshops will be held during a 6 month window spanning the spring to fall of 2024. Opportunities for future collaboration and development of a formal program will be identified during the Pilot and considered as part of program evaluation upon conclusion.

### Short Term Objectives:

- During Summer and Fall of 2024:
  - Offer 10-15 free “vermicomposting at home” workshops facilitated by HRM Solid Waste Resources Staff
  - Distribute 50 mini vermicomposting kits for workshop participants (free of charge for participants)

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Lead:** HRM Solid Waste

Solid Waste will be responsible for:

- Selecting locations, organizing, promoting, and hosting workshops;
- Procuring supplies and assembling kits, developing training and knowledge products;
- Providing and overseeing the budget; and
- Evaluating the Pilot (e.g., tracking attendance, gathering feedback from participants, considering opportunities to improve the Pilot, and assessing potential for creation of a Program).

**Partners:** JustFOOD Team

- The JustFOOD team will collaborate with HRM Solid Waste to plan and evaluate workshops. The JustFOOD team will connect Solid Waste to partners and the broader Halifax Food Council network to promote the Pilot.
- As the Pilot moves forward, additional partner organizations will be identified to support co-hosting and promotion.

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Evaluation will happen throughout the Pilot and will track metrics such as number of participants at workshop, participant experience, and new partnerships developed.

# STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

### Steps Completed:

- Confirm partnership and commitments from HRM Solid Waste
- Establish scope of Pilot and scale of kits and workshops
- Formulate and approve the budget

### Next Steps:

- Select communities for workshops (preference given to equity-deserving communities)
- Establish partnerships with community organizations to promote workshops
- Confirm number of workshops and kits
- Confirm locations, dates, and times of workshops
- Procure and assemble vermicomposting kits
- Offer workshops and distribute kits
- Evaluate the Pilot and identify potential and opportunities for development of a program.

# BUDGET AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

The following will be **incorporated into Solid Waste’s 2024/25 Budget**. There is no new budget ask to Regional Council with this Pilot.

Budget Item	Cost	HST	Total Cost
Vermicomposting kits	\$3,000 (60 kits X \$50 each)	\$450	\$3,450
Promotion	\$1,000	\$150	\$1,115
<b>Total Annual Budget</b>			<b>\$4,565</b>

# APPENDIX



	Indicator Description	Principle	Rationale	Methodology
<b>Indicator 1</b>	Presence of an active interdepartmental Municipal body for advisory and decision-making of food policies and programs (e.g., interdepartmental food working group, food policy office, food team).	Governance	Interdepartmental and cross-sector institutional mechanisms or bodies (food bodies, units or teams) enhance dialogue and coordination, policy integration, impacts, and efficiency gains by breaking down institutional silos.	This indicator allows for (self) assessment of the presence (yes or no), functioning, and effectiveness (with use of a scoring sheet) of the municipal food coordination body. Using the scoring sheet, members of the coordinating body may jointly identify areas for strengthening or improvement.
<b>Indicator 2</b>	Presence of an active multi-sectoral food policy and planning structure (e.g., food policy councils; food partnerships; food coalitions).	Governance	Collaborative processes that involve both government and non-government actors are increasingly considered to be an important element of policy design, action planning, and implementation. By involving multiple diverse food system actors in decision-making, it is significantly more likely that food related policies and programs will be more inclusive and successful in their implementation.	The indicator allows for (self) assessment of the presence (yes or no), functioning, and effectiveness (with use of a scoring sheet) of a multi-sectoral body or mechanism for food policy and planning. This indicator will also aid in assessment of member representation.
<b>Indicator3</b>	Presence of an inventory of local food initiatives and practices to guide development and expansion of municipal food policy and programs.	Governance	Allows for (self) assessment of the presence (yes/no) and use of an inventory of local food initiatives and practices (using a scoring sheet) to guide the development and expansion of municipal food policy and programs. It may spur new development of such an inventory and define recommendations for better use of food assets.	Along with self-assessment, this indicator will be complimented by a regular review of assets that can be quantified and assessed using the HRM Food Asset Map ( <b>See IS 6A</b> ).



<p><b>Indicator 4</b></p>	<p>Existence of an emergency food supply and resilience management plan for the Municipality (in response to disasters; vulnerabilities in food production, transport, and access; socio economic shocks; and other disruptions) based on community vulnerability assessments.</p>	<p>Governance</p>	<p>Food systems are increasingly affected by both acute shocks (such as floods, wind storms, disease outbreaks, supply disruptions, and food price hikes) as well as chronic stresses (such as longer-term projected climate changes in climate patterns, uncontrolled urban growth, inefficiencies in systems to support production activities, and chronic poverty). Food resilience planning is critical to supporting the health of residents and the food system.</p>	<p>The indicator allows for (self) assessment of the presence and level of implementation of an emergency food supply and resilience management plan. Plan implementation and efficacy may also be assessed. Both exercises help define areas for improvement. This indicator will measure the development of the Emergency Food Playbook (<b>see IS 45b</b>) and impact of the HRM Emergency Food Truck (<b>see IS 45b.ii</b>)</p>
<p><b>Indicator 5</b></p>	<p>Percentage of people living in food-insecure households</p>	<p>Social and Economic Equity</p>	<p>Access to enough nutritionally adequate food was declared a basic human right in 1996. The Municipality has a responsibility to work to guarantee the human right to adequate food.</p>	<p>Statistics Canada measures food insecurity using the Household Food Security Survey Module, 18 questions about experiences of food deprivation over the past 12 months. HRM has been tracking this KPI since 2018 through the Council Priorities Scorecard and annual performance measurement.</p>

<b>Indicator 6</b>	The cost of a nutritious food basket.	Social and Economic Equity	<p>Food costing is used to monitor both affordability and accessibility of foods by relating the cost of the food basket to individual / family incomes. It will help to determine (i) the minimum cost of a nutritionally adequate, balanced diet (nutritious food basket) and (ii) the affordability of a healthy diet by household type.</p> <p>This indicator may provide rationale to HRM, the HFC, and other food system actors on the importance of supporting and promoting access to nutritious, safe, personally acceptable foods through policy and program development.</p>	HRM has been reporting on the food component of the Market Basket Measure since 2018 and this is a KPI for annual Council Priorities Scorecard.
<b>Indicator 7</b>	The food consumer price index.	Social and Economic Equity	The consumer price index measures changes in retail food prices. It can be used to monitor and assess both the affordability and accessibility of food.	Statistics Canada regularly reports on the CPI
<b>Indicator 8</b>	Number of schools with a school food program.	Social and Economic Equity	School food programs have the potential to improve children's lives, to strengthen communities, and to transform food systems. A daily school meal can mean not only better nutrition and health, but also increased access to and achievement in education.	This indicator is intended to capture the prevalence and accessibility of school food programs. This indicator should be further disaggregated to reflect the number of schools with well-established, universal breakfast and lunch programs.
<b>Indicator 9</b>	Presence of food-related policies and targets with a specific focus on socially vulnerable groups.	Social and Economic Equity	The indicator allows for (self) assessment of the presence (yes/no) and level of implementation of food-related policies and targets amongst the municipality, the Food Council, plan partners, and key food system players (with help of a scoring sheet) that either directly target vulnerable groups or do so indirectly by supporting and enabling the grass-root activities of community-based networks.	This indicator is designed to increase social inclusion and increase food access and sovereignty for equity-seeking communities. A critical assessment of the effectiveness of policies is also needed to identify areas for improvement.

<p><b>Indicator 10</b></p>	<p>Paid labour on farms by worker type.</p>	<p>Social and Economic Equity</p>	<p>Food systems are a major generator of employment opportunities but working conditions are often poor and low paying. Food system change needs to understand both the significance and severity of the issues facing agricultural workers. The sheer scale of the working poor in the sector and the inherently dangerous and uncertain nature of agricultural work require that all levels of government focus on addressing decent work deficits.</p>	<p>This indicator supports assessment of the on-farm labour force within the municipality. It should capture (1) # of full-time and part-time farm workers; (2) # of paid family member farm workers; (3) # of seasonal/temporary farm workers; and (4) # of migrant farm workers. Ideally this indicator would also measure the proportion of workers receiving a living wage, by type of work. This data alone is insufficient, attempts should be made to quantify and qualify labour opportunities, standards, and conditions across the sector.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 11</b></p>	<p>Number of households that live within 500 meters of food outlets</p>	<p>Health, Wellness, and Resilience</p>	<p>Food access and related health outcomes are affected by residents' geographic proximity to food outlets. Long distances to supermarkets and other outlets are further exacerbated when residents lack the financial resources to own a car, have insufficient access to public transit, or are socially isolated. Thorough assessment of food retail environments will better equip policy makers and researchers to target interventions.</p>	<p>HRM has developed methodology to analyze the food outlet data set of the Food Asset Map (<a href="#">see IS 6A</a>) to determine the # of residents within 500M of an outlet. This was originally reported in 2022 and will continue to be a KPI for Council Priorities Scorecard.</p>

<p><b>Indicator 12</b></p>	<p>Number of fresh fruit and vegetable outlets (markets and shops) supported by Government, per 1000 inhabitants.</p>	<p>Health, Wellness, and Resilience</p>	<p>Governments have the ability to influence food supply through the provision of support for fresh food market and retail spaces. Municipal governments may grant trader licenses; provide planning permissions for markets to take place; manage temporary street closures; or provide practical market organizing logistics including signage as well as provision of water, power, cleaning, and waste disposal services. Provincial and Federal Governments may grant funding, resources, and other policy-support.</p>	<p>This indicator aims to assess and improve the provision of supportive programs and policies that enable public food markets to successfully operate.</p> <p>This indicator aims to assess access to healthier options in food outlets. Progression of the HRM Food Asset Map (<b>see IS 6A</b>) should track the availability of fresh produce and once this information is collected for food outlets, the methodology used in Indicator 12 can be used to calculate this Indicator.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 13</b></p>	<p>Percentage of the Nova Scotian population eating five or more fruits and vegetables per day.</p>	<p>Health, Wellness, and Resilience</p>	<p>Fruit and vegetable consumption provides an important source of vitamins, minerals, and fiber, which may reduce risks for certain health conditions.</p>	<p>This indicator measures rates of fruit and vegetable consumption and may, with further work, be assessed in relation to factors such as prevalence of fresh produce markets and food affordability metrics.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 14</b></p>	<p>This indicator measures rates of fruit and vegetable consumption and may, with further work, be assessed in relation to factors such as prevalence of fresh produce markets and food affordability metrics.</p>	<p>Health, Wellness, and Resilience</p>	<p>Many varied organizations and institutions, including the Municipality, play important roles in building food-system related capacity and skills. Learning and skill development opportunities can be designed to promote participatory education, training, and research with a strategic focus on increasing social and economic equity, promoting rights-based approaches, alleviating poverty, and facilitating improved access to adequate and nutritious foods.</p>	<p>This indicator will support assessment of Municipal support for food-systems related learning. It will gather baseline data on which to base analysis of gaps, needs, opportunities, and to build further action. Where possible, it should capture the geographic dispersal of these opportunities and the number of participants.</p>

<b>Indicator 15</b>	Number of registered farms.	Food Production	Farm prevalence is an important factor in the assessment of food system health and resilience.	This indicator should capture associated data such as (1) the number of farms in HRM as a percentage of the total number of farms in Nova Scotia; (2) average farm size; (3) the number of farms by farm type; and (4) the number and average age of principle farm operators.
<b>Indicator 16</b>	Total acres of registered farm land.	Food Production	Development and land-use conversion of agricultural land continues to disrupt the safe and nutritious supply and availability of food. This indicator should support assessment of agricultural land protection efforts. It should also support the assessment of farm consolidation as an important component of food system health.	HRM has been reporting on this since 2020 and is included as a KPI for the Council Priorities Scorecard.
<b>Indicator 17</b>	Total farm operating revenues in HRM as a percentage of total farm operating revenues in Nova Scotia.	Food Production	Food production is a significant contributor to the regional economy. Moreover, the health of our food system depends on the state of farmer livelihoods.	This indicator supports assessment of farmer livelihoods and the economic state of farms in the municipality. This indicator should capture the number of farms per revenue category.
<b>Indicator 18</b>	Proportion of agricultural land in the municipality under sustainable agriculture.	Food Production	Sustainable agricultural production and management practices (1) minimize environmental contamination risks through the promotion of agro-ecological, organic or conservation agriculture; (2) protect and improve the natural resource base (soil, water); (3) conserve and enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitat; (4) maintain other ecosystem services and/or enhance climate adaptation; and (5) reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions.	This indicator supports assessment of agricultural practices across the municipality as related to overall food system health and resilience.

<p><b>Indicator 19</b></p>	<p>The total hectares of community led agricultural land.</p>	<p>Food Production</p>	<p>Community based agriculture is an important metric of urban agriculture activities and the reclamation of land for food production.</p>	<p>Work is currently underway to disaggregate community based agriculture lands and measure the area of community gardens, school gardens, urban/heritage farms and other urban agriculture activities led by community effort.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 20</b></p>	<p>Number of municipal residents with access to urban agricultural space, excluding private residency gardens.</p>	<p>Food Production</p>	<p>Urban agriculture spaces offer a wide array of critical environmental, economic and social benefits.</p>	<p>The indicator measures the accessibility of urban agriculture land and spaces to residents (and specific target groups). The indicator will only reflect impact accurately if data is filtered by factors such as geospatial location, population density, and income levels. As the data collected on the community-led urban agriculture dataset of the HRM Food Asset Map (<b>see IS 6A</b>) advances, work on this indicator will advance.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 21</b></p>	<p>Number and type of urban agriculture spaces, operations, and infrastructure assets.</p>	<p>Food Production</p>	<p>A comprehensive inventory of relevant food system infrastructure and activities will enable policy makers and food system actors to identify food system gaps and areas of opportunity. This indicator should quantify assets such as the number of (1) community gardens, urban farms, and urban orchards; (2) farmers markets; (3) community led food distribution activities (4) registered beekeeping hives; (5) commercial-grade community kitchens; (5) community fridges; and (6) community supported fisheries, among a variety of other assets and activities.</p>	<p>As data is collected for the advancement of the HRM Food Asset Map (<b>see IS 6A</b>), community access to food resources will be tracked and can be used to report on this indicator.</p>

<p><b>Indicator 22</b></p>	<p>Number of fruit and nut trees planted by HRM annually.</p>	<p>Food Production</p>	<p>Fruit and nut production are important sources of food and can be leveraged in urban environments as sources of community food production. The Municipality can shift cultural approaches to food production in public spaces by planting fruit and nut trees that are made accessible to the public.</p>	<p>This indicator will assess municipal progress in this area.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 23</b></p>	<p>Local food consumption rate.</p>	<p>Food Supply and Distribution</p>	<p>Food system transformation work aims to shorten the supply chain of food commodities, including agricultural commodities, providing support for local food production, processing, and distribution. This support builds relationships between farmers and consumers; provides fair-trade, economic opportunities for small and medium scale producers to sell their products; and shortens the supply chain.</p>	<p>Assessments of local food consumption rates can provide insight into local food availability and accessibility, producer livelihoods, food flows throughout a region, and to the health and resilience of the regional food system. HRM and the HFC will continue to pursue relationships with research institutions to advance this indicator.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 24</b></p>	<p>The price of local foods compared to that of imported foods.</p>	<p>Food Supply and Distribution</p>	<p>Without a strong understanding of food pricing and distribution models, local food initiatives are based on assumptions rather than evidence. This indicator may inform program and policy development, including procurement-related policy. It may also be used for consumer-directed public education campaigns.</p>	<p>HRM and the HFC will continue to pursue relationships with research institutions to advance this indicator.</p>

<p><b>Indicator 25</b></p>	<p>Annual Municipal budget investment in food systems, as a proportion of total (investment) budget.</p>	<p>Food Supply and Distribution</p>	<p>Local governments can engage in food systems planning to identify and better understand the various food system gaps and opportunities in their community and develop public policy tools to better serve residents, addressing issues of food insecurity and promoting food justice and sovereignty.</p>	<p>This indicator seeks to assess municipal investment in improvements and expansion of programs and infrastructure related to food systems, especially those that provide fresh food to residents. It should also showcase the breakdown of food system investments by category (e.g., food markets or retail outlets, food literacy programming, urban agriculture programming, and other categories). While a single investment figure may not, on its own, be very informative, it does provide a relative idea as to the level of Municipal investment in food systems work, compared with other areas of investment or against total Municipal budget.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 26</b></p>	<p>Number of municipal food processing and distribution infrastructures available to food producers.</p>	<p>Food Supply and Distribution</p>	<p>Accessible food processing and distribution infrastructure (including storage buildings, processing plants, transport facilities, and wholesale and consumer markets) is critical to food system health and resilience. The municipality can play a critical role in supporting food processing and distribution by providing producers with access to publicly owned infrastructure.</p>	<p>The indicator monitors the number (and type) of municipal infrastructure for storage, processing, and distribution of food located in the municipal area. As data is collected to advance the HRM Food Asset Map (<b>see IS 6A</b>) work will continue to build datasets of food processing and distribution infrastructure to inform this indicator.</p>



<p><b>Indicator 27</b></p>	<p>Proportion of food procurement expenditure by public institutions on food from sustainable, ethical sources and shorter supply chains.</p>	<p>Food Supply and Distribution</p>	<p>The total annual expenditure of public sector institutions on food can be very significant. As procurers of food and managers of food supply contracts for various services, municipal governments can play a critical role in affecting positive change.</p>	<p>This indicator measures the proportion of food procurement expenditure by public institutions on food from sustainable, ethical sources, and shorter (local/regional) supply chains. It should detail public procurement and trade policies that aim to facilitate an increase in local and sustainable food supply and distribution.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 28</b></p>	<p>Annual tonnage of organic waste collected by the Municipality, as well as the tonnage and proportion of this waste that is re-used in agricultural production taking place within the municipality.</p>	<p>Food Waste</p>	<p>Municipalities generate enormous amounts of waste from households, industries, and markets. Many organic wastes are nutrient-rich and can be productively re-used in agricultural systems, enhancing resource recovery and circular economic development. It is therefore critical to collect and assess data on municipal organics waste generation and reuse.</p>	<p>This indicator should capture (1) the total tonnage of urban organic waste collected by the Municipality; (2) the total tonnage of urban organic waste that is recycled or made available for reuse; (3) and the total tonnage of recycled organic waste that is used in agriculture production.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 29</b></p>	<p>Presence of policies or regulations that address food waste prevention, recovery, and redistribution.</p>	<p>Food Waste</p>	<p>A significant share of food grown for human consumption is never eaten. Food loss and waste exacerbate the pressures on regional and global food systems, increase the risk of food insecurity, and are significant contributors to climate change.</p>	<p>This indicator measures and catalogs the number (and type) of food-waste related policies and regulations; the number and type of target groups; associated levels of implementation and enforcement; and associated monitoring, evaluation, and update mechanisms.</p>