

# Creating a Food Secure Community

## What We Heard

April 2020



Brandon Food Council  
[brandonfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:brandonfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com)



## Introduction

Thank you to everyone who came out and participated in the Creating a Food Secure Community event that was held by the Brandon Food Council on Tuesday, February 11<sup>th</sup> at Helping Hands Soup Kitchen in downtown Brandon. Over 50 people attended, generating an abundance of rich ideas about how to achieve food security in the City, including the vision laid out in the [Brandon Food Charter](#). The insights gathered at this and other future events the Council is planning will contribute to an integrated food strategy for the City that the Council is tasked with developing over the next several years.

We were grateful to begin the event on February 11<sup>th</sup> with a smudge led by Grace Masse and to hear from local food security leaders, including Jan Chaboyer, Brandon City Councillor, Lisa Ramsey, [Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre](#), and Hope Roberts, [7<sup>th</sup> Street Health Access Centre](#). Following the presentations, participants broke into small groups to brainstorm their vision for a food secure city by 2030. A range of ideas emerged spanning a continuum from addressing immediate food security needs through to long term planning and policy development.

A key discussion point was the need for an accessible and updated list of available community food services and more collaboration across agencies to ensure emergency food supports are always available, especially on statutory holidays and Sundays. Considerable discussion of the sustainability of the City food system also took place, focusing on how to grow more food and minimize waste. Participants expressed a need to better understand City bylaws as they pertain to local food production (such as front yard vegetable gardens or backyard chickens) and to potentially adapt bylaws to be more friendly for growing food, such as allowing fruit trees to be planted in public spaces. In the context of food production, promoting access to land for young growers and farmers as well as forging stronger links with rural producers, especially those engaged in organic and ecological practices, were also raised as priorities.

The event clearly demonstrated there are many opportunities for collaboration to make more effective use of the food programs already available in Brandon, to remove policy and legislative barriers to local food production, and to advocate for income boosting measures to reduce poverty and support ways of accessing food in a dignified way.



## Next Steps

### Review the group discussion notes

Review the group discussion notes from our event on the next page and let us know about anything you think is missing and what you're passionate to get working on!

### Community Events

What topics would you like to see featured at future Brandon Food Council community events? Let us know!

### Join a subcommittee

At our March 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting the Brandon Food Council began the development of sub-committees and working groups to take on priority projects and actions in collaboration with the community. Please reach out to us if you are interested in joining any of the following sub-committees:

- *Harvesting and Processing*: This sub-committee will focus on organizing a hands-on even/workshop later in 2020 focusing on food harvesting and preservation skills.
- *Community Gardens*: This subcommittee will seek to provide coordination and support to community gardens throughout the City.
- *Education*: This subcommittee will support educational events hosted by the Council including compiling resources related to food and education and creating a template/set of best practices to guide educational initiatives.

### Follow our new Facebook page

We started a Facebook page! We will provide regular updates on Brandon Food Council activities/events here as well as share exciting resources and news about food more broadly. Please join us [here](#), invite your friends and share your food ideas on this page!



## Group discussion notes

At the event, participants were asked 'What is your vision for a food secure community by 2030 and how do we achieve this? Following are the main ideas we heard. Please read, review, and let us know if there are more ideas you want to add!

<b>Networking and coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an information sharing network for the local food system – repository for idea sharing and accessing resources. made available online and through social media</li> <li>• Enhanced community garden coordination.</li> <li>• Consider hiring a garden box coordinator for the City.</li> </ul>
<b>Local food systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone should have access to affordable nutrition rich foods.</li> <li>• Local food systems provide opportunities for consumers and producers to meet, network, collaborate and celebrate food</li> <li>• Consider more neighbourhood, cooperatively owned stores. Neechi Co-Op in Winnipeg may be a good model – community co-op selling food, crafts, community classes etc.</li> <li>• Involves trading of food/bartering (not just buying).</li> <li>• Establish more food share networks and food box programs. Volunteering around food can build a sense of purpose – opportunity to feel involved and build connections with community.</li> <li>• Have more events to celebrate food e.g. yearly feast.</li> <li>• More community kitchens to join people together.</li> <li>• Local food systems should also provide sustainable income for local producers.</li> <li>• Local food systems can also provide educational opportunities through creating connections between consumers and producers – e.g. school field trips to farms.</li> </ul>
<b>Growing food in the city</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow more!</li> <li>• Wheat city to food city.</li> <li>• Devote more City land to food production.</li> <li>• Each family has their own garden. Gardens instead of lawns.</li> <li>• Increase diversity of produce grown and increase fruit trees in public green spaces.</li> <li>• Final stage of Assiniboine Food Forest is to have locally grown food that is accessible.</li> <li>• Creating more incredible edibles options, including more funding for this program.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More greenhouses and rooftops to supply fresh food to Samaritan house</li> <li>• Need to hand down food traditions pertaining to hunting, growing, and cooking.</li> <li>• Remember our relationship to the land and traditional foods.</li> </ul>
<b>Community food supports and services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every child should be attending school on a full stomach.</li> <li>• Providing food that supports health.</li> <li>• Need better funding models for healthy food access and delivery.</li> <li>• Balance service delivery for those in need to cover all days of the week (especially Sundays and statutory holidays). Better distribution of resources and coordination is key.</li> <li>• Longer hours for the food bank.</li> <li>• Consider ways of supporting food sharing between organizations (e.g. trading hunted meat for vegetables).</li> <li>• End to stigmas surrounding use of food services.</li> <li>• Increased funding for Helping Hands to open everyday. Consider have a central location, like Helping Hands, as a one stop shop for food – this may increase donations and streamline efforts.</li> </ul>
<b>Food access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh fruit and vegetables at every meal.</li> <li>• Foods for all cultures available.</li> <li>• Safe food for everyone – pesticide free.</li> </ul>
<b>Food education</b> (e.g., health, nutrition, culinary and cooking promotion and education)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning cuisines of other cultures.</li> <li>• Understanding good nutrition.</li> <li>• Education for basic skills cooking – what to do with a potato? Engage participants in process – remain flexible so folks learn to grow and make their own food.</li> <li>• Increased education for adults in community spaces like Helping Hands to teach, cook, eat together.</li> <li>• Increased education for children – how to grow produce, what to do with it, that it might not look the same as what's in the grocery store.</li> <li>• Increase education and advocacy for food insecurity.</li> <li>• Change our diet to eat more locally available foods.</li> </ul>
<b>Food waste</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim for zero food waste.</li> <li>• Grocery stores give food banks leftovers.</li> <li>• Restaurants donating leftovers.</li> <li>• Consider reviewing regulations on expiry dates to minimize waste.</li> <li>• Legislation for food waste.</li> </ul>
<b>Food policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make ideas scalable.</li> </ul>





- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Need to link up immediate efforts (front-line workers) with long-term policy change/big picture ideas.</li><li>• Need specialist knowledge but allow for increased communication and sharing of ideas.</li><li>• Incentivize healthy food options – build in taxation on unhealthy alternatives.</li><li>• National breakfast/lunch programs in schools that are properly funded.</li><li>• Long-term goal is no need for emergency food and an end to hunger. This may be realized through living wage that supports housing and food.</li><li>• Brandon Collaborative – may help formation of more integrated policy with food as a pillar of a healthy community.</li></ul> |
|--|--|



## Get in touch

Please send all ideas and replies back to our new email at [brandonfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:brandonfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com)



This report and the conversation that informed it were made possible with support from Food Matters Manitoba, Province of Manitoba Health Seniors Active Living (MHSAL) and Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect MHSAL and PHAC.



[foodmattersmanitoba.ca](http://foodmattersmanitoba.ca)



Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada

Public Health  
Agency of Canada