



# Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy Implementation Plan

**PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR 2015**



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## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy is committed to creating a healthy, equitable, and sustainable food system that contributes to the economic and ecological health and social well-being of the City of Thunder Bay and Area.

In 2014, the Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy was endorsed through a formal motion by the Councils of City of Thunder Bay, Municipality of Oliver Paipooonge, O'Connor Township, Township of Gillies, Municipality of Shuniah, Conmee Township and the Municipality of Neebing. An Implementation Plan has now been developed with key priorities for 2015.

The Food Strategy is a strategic action plan to carry forward the Thunder Bay Food Charter, a set of sustainable development principles endorsed in 2008 by the City of Thunder Bay and other nearby municipalities, the Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board, Thunder Bay District Board of Health, local businesses, and not-for-profit organizations. The Charter's overarching goal of ensuring access to healthy food for all and creating a strong local food system underlies the priority recommendations in the Food Strategy, reflecting the combined voices and values of the many who contributed to its creation.

It was clear during the development of the Food Strategy that its success will depend upon the efforts and cooperation of many people. The recommendations of the Food Strategy are therefore written with a strong orientation towards collaboration and partnerships.

The Food Strategy is grounded in the local context, and a firm commitment to action. To guide this undertaking, an Implementation Plan is being launched with key priorities for 2015. Priorities were decided based on where there is existing momentum, opportunities for partnerships, and potential to add capacity. The priorities in the Implementation Plan will be reassessed annually by the Steering Committee and Administrative Committee, and in conversation with the many connected community initiatives working to build a sustainable local food system.

A large number of organizations and businesses are involved in implementing the Food Strategy, representing a broad range of sectors.

- Anishnawbe Mushkiki
- Beanstalk Consulting
- Beef Farmers of Thunder Bay
- Belluz Farm
- Canadian Red Cross
- City of Thunder Bay
- Confederation College
- Conmee Township
- DeBruin's Greenhouses
- District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board
- EarthCare Thunder Bay
- Eat Local Pizza
- EcoSuperior Environmental Programs
- Food Action Network
- Food Security Research Network
- LA Quality Foods
- Lakehead District School Board
- Lakehead University
- Lakehead University Student Union
- Loudon Bros. Ltd.
- Mile Hill Farm
- Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
- Municipality of Neebing
- Municipality of Oliver Paipouge
- Municipality of Shuniah
- North Superior Workforce Planning Board
- Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre
- O'Connor Township
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs
- Ontario Nature
- Our Kids Count
- Poverty Free Thunder Bay
- Regional Food Distribution Association
- Roots to Harvest
- Sleepy G Farm
- Superior Seasons Food Market
- Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce
- Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission
- Thunder Bay Country Market
- Thunder Bay District Health Unit
- Thunder Bay Federation of Agriculture
- Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre
- Township of Gillies
- True North Community Co-op

#### Administrative Committee members:

**Councillor Bernie Kamphof**

Municipality of Oliver Paipouge  
Food Strategy Co-Chair

**Councillor Rebecca Johnson**

City of Thunder Bay  
Food Strategy Co-Chair

**Thora Cartlidge**

Land Use Planner, City of Thunder Bay

**Henriet DeBruin**

Vice-President, Thunder Bay Federation of Agriculture and co-owner of DeBruin's Greenhouses

**Gwen O'Reilly**

Executive Director, Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre and Thunder Bay Good Food Box Program

**Ellen Mortfield**

Executive Director, EcoSuperior Environmental Programs

**Catherine Schwartz-Mendez**

Nutritionist, Thunder Bay District Health Unit, Food Action Network Chair

**Kendal Donahue**

Food Strategy Coordinator, EcoSuperior Environmental Programs

Working with community partners and stakeholders, the Food Strategy is facilitating and championing 20 initiatives in the community. These projects are described in the table below and are under various stages of development. The table also identifies the link to the strategy and key sectors involved in each project.



## FOOD ACCESS

**GOAL:** Create a food system in Thunder Bay and Area based on the principle that food is more than a commodity—that it is a human right—and in which all community members have regular access to adequate, affordable, nutritious, safe and culturally appropriate food in a way that maintains dignity.



### STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS



### PRIORITY PROJECTS



### MAIN SECTORS INVOLVED

**1.3.B** Develop specific indicators and create a **report card** to evaluate progress on an ongoing basis for the purpose of informing neighbourhood level and city-wide planning



Develop a **community food security report card** that establishes baselines of community food security for the Thunder Bay area

- Public Health
- Social Service Agencies
- Community-Based Advocates

**1.1.F** Encourage municipal and community partners to **integrate food security activities** into **programming** at community hubs, such as recreation centres, schools, and libraries



Identify opportunities for **integrating food skills training** into the **programming** of local organizations

- Public Health
- Social Service Agencies
- Community-Based Advocates
- Local Government
- School Boards

**1.3.A** Using a participatory model (such as community **food access mapping**) identify how citizens would prefer to create more food-friendly **neighbourhoods** and municipalities



Hold community consultations in order to identify opportunities for improving **food access** at the **neighbourhood** level, such as through piloting good food markets

- Public Health
- Social Service Agencies
- Community-Based Advocates

**1.2.C** Review public transportation planning to reflect the reality that many citizens use **public transit** to obtain and bring home food, and that many of those citizens have mobility concerns, children in tow, or difficulty affording multiple fares



Explore **public transit** options to increase food access

- Public Health
- Social Services Agencies
- Community-Based Advocates
- Local Government



## FOREST & FRESHWATER FOODS

GOAL: Increase our region’s knowledge of available forest and freshwater foods and their sustainable harvest, protect and conserve forest and freshwater food ecosystems, and support a diverse and sustainable forest and freshwater foods economy within the region. This economy includes both harvesting for personal consumption and the development of commercial opportunities.



### STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS



### PRIORITY PROJECTS



### MAIN SECTORS INVOLVED

**2.3.B** Work in partnership with local stakeholders to identify and implement **strategies** which **stimulate growth** in this sector, such as through branding and infrastructure developments



Support the development of a forest food **harvesting guide** as a strategy to increase sustainable harvesting for **personal consumption** and to **stimulate growth** in this sector

- Environmental Organizations
- Public Health
- Local Businesses
- Post-Secondary Educational Institutions
- First Nations Organizations
- Provincial Government

**1.3.D** Promote **entrepreneurship** by developing a network for business resources and **training**, small business supports, and mentoring



Extend **training** opportunities to forest food **entrepreneurs**

- Environmental Organizations
- Social Service Agencies
- Economic Development Organizations



# INFRASTRUCTURE

**GOAL:** To support the creation of a food supply chain that links local production to processing, distribution and marketing, consumption and waste management in ways that sustain the local economy, minimize environmental impact and improve people's access to healthy food.



## STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS



## PRIORITY PROJECTS



## MAIN SECTORS INVOLVED

**3.1.A** Conduct a **feasibility study** that would identify current capacity for providing needed and projected food storage, processing and distribution services in Thunder Bay and area



Conduct a **market study** to determine the potential market share of local food

- Economic Development Organizations
- Food Producers
- Agricultural Organizations
- Local Government

**3.1.A** Conduct a **feasibility study** that would identify current capacity for providing needed and projected food storage, processing and distribution services in Thunder Bay and area



Undertake a food aggregation hub **feasibility study** in consultation with the community

- Economic Development Organizations
- Food Producers
- Agricultural Organizations
- Local Government

**3.4.A** Support the development of food waste diversion initiatives to divert **food waste** from the municipal garbage stream, such as a source-separated organic waste program and public education for homeowners and businesses



Undertake a **food waste** audit for several public sector institutions

- Environmental Organizations
- Broader Public Sector Institutions
- Local Government
- Food Producers



# PROCUREMENT

GOAL: Leverage procurement food spending to develop a public sector food supply chain that contributes to the economic, ecological and social well-being of Thunder Bay and Area through food purchases that foster local production, processing, and distribution.



## STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS



## PRIORITY PROJECTS



## MAIN SECTORS INVOLVED

**4.1.A** Establish a **local food spending benchmark** for the Broader Public Sector, incorporate local food language and targets into existing and new policies, and set minimum annual increase targets



Establish a **local food spending benchmark** for public sector institutions

- Local Government
- Public Health
- Agricultural Organizations
- Food Producers
- Broader Public Sector Institutions
- Food Processors
- Food Distributors

**4.1.C** Adjust **procurement policies and practices** where possible to enhance consumption of local foods, such as adopting menu plans and recipes which coincide with the local harvest season



Adjust **public sector procurement policies and practices** to increase purchases of locally grown, harvested, and processed foods

- Local Government
- Public Health
- Agricultural Organizations
- Food Producers
- Broader Public Sector Institutions
- Food Processors
- Food Distributors
- Community-Based Organizations

**4.1.D** Recommend procurement policies which adopt **environmental and social commitments**, such as Fair Trade, food waste reduction and diversion



Provide **learning opportunities** for chefs and food service providers in the public sector on how to incorporate procurement practices that benefit the **economic, environmental and social good**

- Local Government
- Broader Public Sector Institutions
- Economic Development Organizations
- Food Producers



# PRODUCTION

GOAL: Protect and encourage growth in farm-scale production so that a greater proportion of food is grown, raised, prepared, processed, and purchased closer to home.



## STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS



## PRIORITY PROJECTS



## MAIN SECTORS INVOLVED

**5.4.A** Encourage farm organizations, educational institutions, non-profits and business development groups to **support programs** that recruit, train, and provide technical assistance to both **new** and established **farmers** and those transitioning to more sustainable practices



Initiate the development of a **farmer training program** for new entrants

- Post-Secondary Institutions
- Agricultural Organizations
- Food Producers
- Community-Based Organizations
- First Nations Organizations

**5.2.F** Celebrate and promote food grown in the area through various avenues, such as catering, festivals, **food tourism**, and campaigns



Develop the area's **food tourism** scene such as through campaigns, events, branding and marketing

- Local Government
- Economic Development Organizations
- Tourism Organizations
- Provincial Government

**5.1.A** Convene **roundtables and networking opportunities** to bring together and expand networks of producers, processors, distributors, and institutions to understand each others' needs, identify best practices, create synergies, and take advantage of opportunities



Increase **communication and collaborations** between producers and chefs, such as through forums

- Economic Development Organizations
- Agricultural Organizations
- Local Government
- Post-Secondary Institutions
- Local Food Businesses
- Tourism Organizations



# SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENTS

GOAL: Improve the eating habits, food skills and food literacy of children and youth in Thunder Bay and Area through supportive healthy school food environments.



## STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS



## PRIORITY PROJECTS



## MAIN SECTORS INVOLVED

**6.2.B** Engage and empower students in improving the **food culture of schools**



Increase the amount of healthy and local **food served** in and around schools and engage students in learning **food skills**

- Public Health
- Community-Based Organizations
- School Boards
- Parent Councils
- Local Government

**6.1.A** Working with parent groups, teachers, **school boards** and the Ministry of Education to weave **food literacy** broadly into the curriculum



Present key opportunities to **school boards** on ways to improve **food literacy** and create more supportive school food environments

- Public Health
- Community-Based Organizations
- School Boards
- Parent Councils



# URBAN AGRICULTURE

GOAL: Increase food production in the urban landscape and support the participation of citizens in urban agriculture activities.



## STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS



## PRIORITY PROJECTS



## MAIN SECTORS INVOLVED

**7.1.C** Increase the physical presence of **urban agriculture** through visible demonstration sites, such as pollinator gardens, edible landscaping, rooftop gardens, and community greenhouses



Support **urban agriculture** projects identified through a community-based engagement process

- Local Government
- Environmental Organizations
- Community-Based Organizations

**7.2.E** Conduct research and develop policy that is supportive of urban agricultural practices such as **backyard chickens**, urban beekeeping, and land use arrangements that would facilitate more land being used to grow food



Lead a community consultation process on **backyard chicken** policies and regulations to inform land use planning in Thunder Bay and area

- Local Government
- Environmental Organizations
- Public Health
- Community-Based Organizations

**7.1.D** Offer a variety of **educational opportunities** such as courses on growing, preservation, storage, and composting



Support the development of a **pollinator education** program to be offered through schools

- Environmental Organizations
- School Boards
- Community-Based Organizations

The 2015 Implementation Plan is a living document that is expected to evolve with changing needs and opportunities in the community. It will be regularly reviewed by the Steering Committee, anticipating that the success of the plan will be met with the ongoing participation of all those who have contributed to its priorities to date.

To learn more about the Food Strategy, please visit: [tbfoodstrategy.ca](http://tbfoodstrategy.ca)





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