

- THE LOCAL FOOD ASSET TASK FORCE -



THE **LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN**
OF THE VANCOUVER PARK BOARD

JULY 2013



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VANCOUVER BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION

LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN

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A honey bee pollinating lavender shrubs at Grandview Park

FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that Vancouver Park Board's Local Food Task Force presents the Local Food Action Plan. This report is the result of the vision and hard work of Park Board staff and a thoughtful group of community leaders pioneering the local food movement in Vancouver. We hope that the recommendations in this report will allow the Vancouver Park Board to become a leader in supporting and growing local, sustainable food in Vancouver.

The Park Board Local Food Action Plan grew out of a larger international movement focused on improving local food systems. Citizens around the world and in Vancouver have a growing awareness of the link between the food we consume, human health, social justice and the environment.

The Vancouver Park Board is rich in "food assets" - we have community kitchens, community gardens, fruit trees, restaurants and concession stands. These assets extend to every neighbourhood in Vancouver giving us an amazing opportunity to strengthen neighbourhood food networks across the city. The Park Board also has a mandate to support active and healthy communities. This report challenges traditional views that we can only achieve this mandate through recreation. It acknowledges that creating healthy, active and connected communities

requires a broader perspective. Food is central to our health, well-being and sense of community.

The Local Food Task Force was the first modern task force used by the Park Board to engage the community in developing policy. The task force was a collaboration between Park Board staff and community volunteers. It builds upon the work of the Greenest City Action Plan and many organizations who are leading the way with food-related projects throughout the city. This report contains both short- and medium-term goals, designed to tackle those items that can be accomplished right away and plan to implement the recommendations that will take longer to realize.

Vancouver is unique in having an elected, independent Park Board to oversee our green space, community centres and urban forest. It gives us the opportunity to engage with the community to adapt our policies to the ever-changing needs of the residents of Vancouver. This report is an example of what can be achieved by harnessing the energy of community engaged individuals to bring about change to our city.

We look forward to watching these recommendations grow!

Bon Appetite,
Local Food Task Force



1 INTRODUCTION

A great deal of foresight, ingenuity, and collaborative work has already been brought to bear on planning for the future of Vancouver’s urban food systems. Since 2003, when Council called for a just and sustainable food system, Vancouver has been laying the policy framework necessary to realize this vision. The Park Board already has many assets that are contributing to a sustainable local food system, and many more with potential to make even more significant contributions. The approach to the creation of this Local Food Action Plan was to build on pre-existing policy frameworks as well as existing Park Board assets to create an action-focused, feasible, creative, and uniquely Park-Board-made plan. The Park Board is proud to present this Local Food Action Plan (“LFAP”) to guide the work of enabling the sustainable local food movement in Vancouver over the next five years.

Unique Role of Park Board in Sustainable Local Food

The Park Board has a vital role to play in achieving a just and sustainable food system for Vancouver for three main reasons. First, it is uniquely rooted in neighbourhoods and communities through its network of over 230 parks and 24 community centres. Every day park board staff interact with people that they serve and support, giving staff a deep understanding of where the opportunities and vulnerabilities are in the food system as it relates to the children, youth, adults and seniors that are in these communities. Second, the Board is asset rich, and the land and facilities under Park Board management can be significant contributors to a thriving local food system. Finally, the Park Board

can facilitate unique connections between people, their health, their communities and the ecosystem within its mandate of connecting people to green space, healthy living and community. In 2012 the Park Board formally recognized the importance of local food in the organization and included a local food objective in the strategic plan.

used to inform the creation of the LFAP include:

- » Vancouver Food Charter (2007)
- » Greenest City Action Plan (2011)
- » Park Board Strategic Plan (2012)
- » Vancouver Food Strategy (2013)

Policy Framework

There is a ten-year history of food policy work in Vancouver, much of it catalysed by the Vancouver Food Policy Council, established in 2004 to advise City Council. The Park Board is standing on the shoulders of giants in the creation of the LFAP, and has built this plan based on these strong foundations. The key policy milestones that were

Each of these policies provide context to the vision, principles, goals and actions used to shape the LFAP. Additional policy and research was considered in the development of LFAP, and a more detailed list of referenced material is included in Appendix A. This policy framework was considered in the context of the Park Board's existing local food assets, which are described in detail in the next section.

*Fruit tree orchard at
Strathcona Park*

MÉLANGE 2 / 混合箱 2

IG BIN 混合箱
MÉLANGE

Multilingual compost mixing bins at Strathcona Community Garden

2 LOCAL FOOD ASSETS

The Vancouver Food Strategy (p. 129) defines food assets as “resources, facilities, services or spaces that are available to residents of the City, either at the city-wide or neighbourhood scale, and which are used to support the City’s food system... Alongside physical food assets are human capacity or social food assets.”

To better understand the Park Board’s current contributions and potential for increasing and integrating food assets into the existing parks and recreation system, the Task Force convened three working groups that brought together Park Board and City staff, service providers and community partner organizations:

LAND

community gardening, shared production, urban farming, orchards, food trees, pollinator gardens, edible landscaping.

FACILITIES

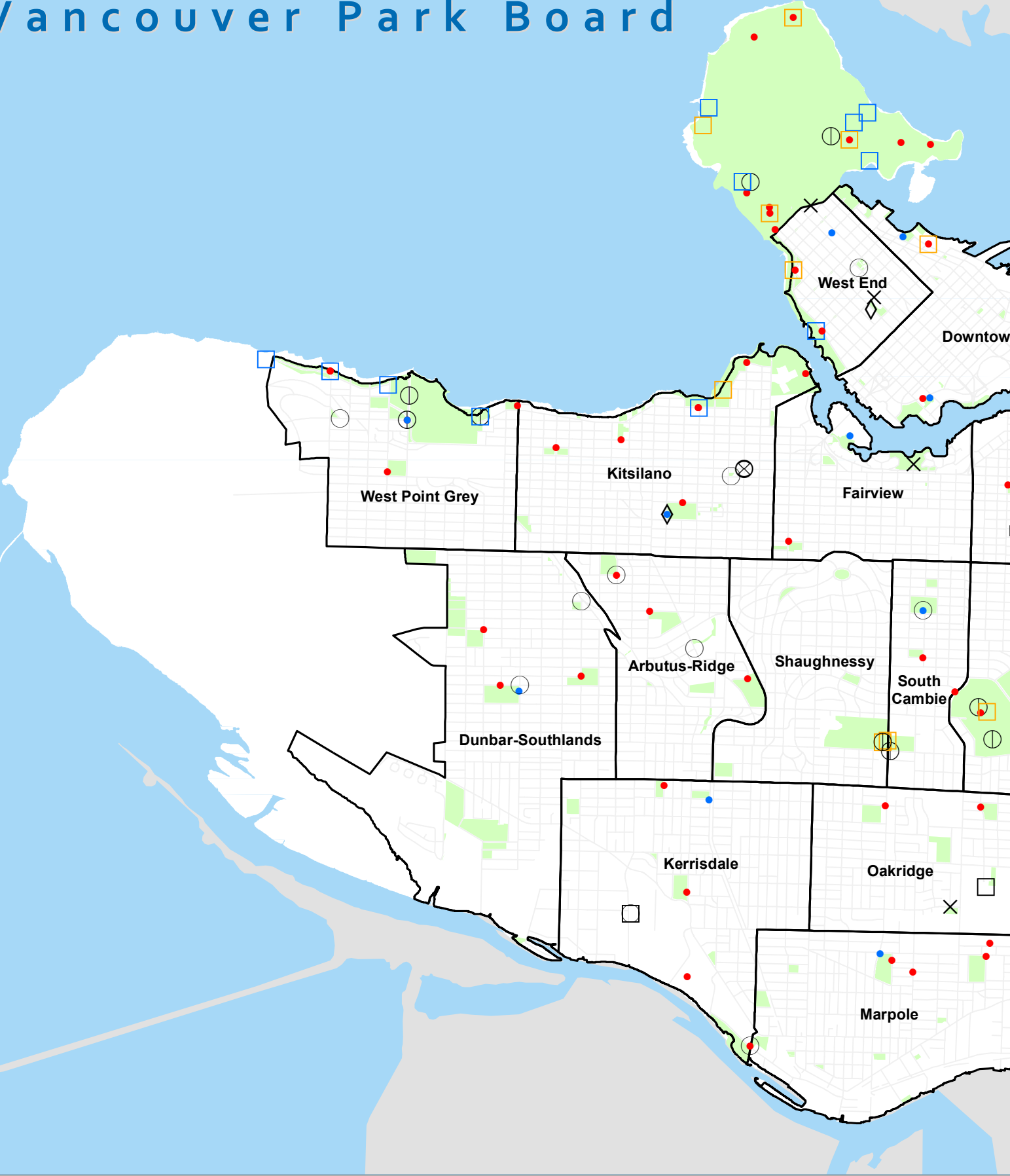
procurement, kitchens, farmers markets, community food markets, field houses, specialized facilities, storage, meeting and office spaces.

CAPACITY BUILDING & PROGRAMS

food access programs, community food programs, community-based food organizations, space provision, funding, celebrations.

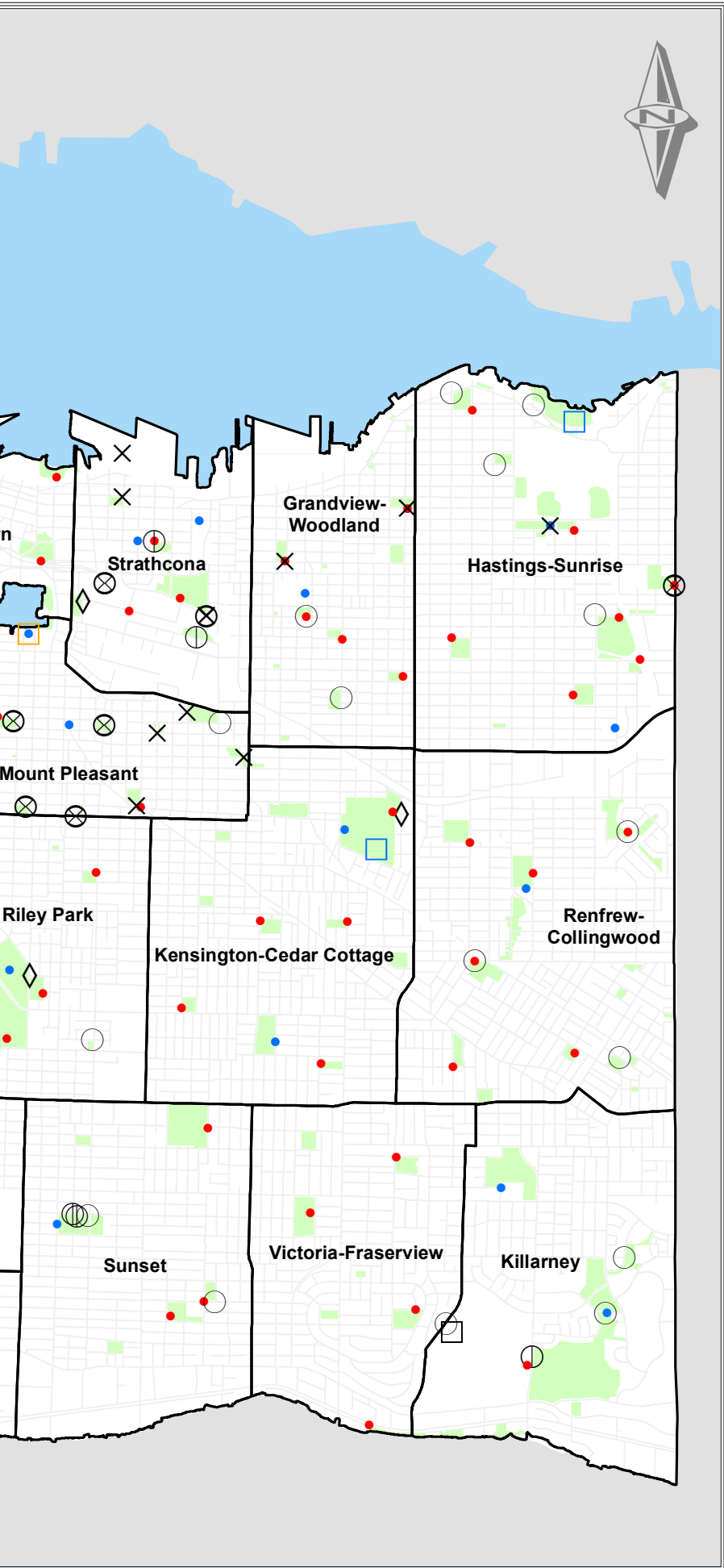
Older inventories were amalgamated, updated, and mapped to guide working groups and the task force. Also, more detailed information on some of these assets was collected using a variety of methods. What follows are the details about food assets in the Park Board currently available to support and enable the sustainable local food movements in Vancouver.

Food Assets in the Vancouver Park Board





Vancouver's Board of Parks and Recreation has numerous growing spaces, facilities, programs, and staff that contribute to the city's local food system. This map shows the location of many of these assets, including potential assets that may be leveraged to better support the goals set out in the Local Food Action Plan.



Food Assets

- ✕ Community Gardens
- Food Trees & Orchards
- ⊗ Community Gardens with Food Trees/Orchards
- ⊖ Horticultural Assets
- Community Centres
- Concessions
- ▭ Leased Restaurants
- ▭ Golf Course Clubhouse Restaurants
- ◇ Farmer's Market Locations
- Field Houses & Other Park Board Facilities
- Parks
- ⊕ Neighbourhoods
- Streets

Scale: 1:55,000
 Datum: NAD 83
 Projection: UTM Zone 10N

June 2013



LAND

Community Gardens

There are currently 24 community gardens on Park Board land, totalling nearly a thousand plots (951) as well as other assets including collaborative garden plots, pollinator plantings, mason bee lodges, apiaries, educational gardens, arts and culture based gardens, and food trees. Each garden operates through a license agreement between the Park Board and the community group responsible, and each garden remains open to the public.

Food Trees

There are an estimated 725 fruit and nut trees growing in park spaces and golf courses managed by the Park Board. While a majority of these were planted in recent decades by park operations, a small number of these trees are remnants of orchards and farms that occupied the sites prior to them becoming city parks (eg. Callister and Valdez). New food trees are planted in close collaboration with community partners who are willing to ensure trees are maintained and harvested.

Recently, the online project *FoodTree* has estimated that there are approximately 600 food trees planted on City boulevards using data from the City's Open Data catalogue. However, these figures are unverified and the

◀ Nearly 1,000 community garden plots are located in Vancouver parks, including 64 in Pandora Park, and offer gathering and food growing spaces for residents across the city.

number of trees producing food available for human consumption is likely much lower due to some trees being identified as food bearing due to their species name, when they may actually be ornamental (e.g. some varieties of cherry).

Other food-growing assets

In the past several years, the Park Board has partnered with the Environmental Youth Alliance to install 4 pollinator gardens throughout Vancouver parks that provide native bee habitat. A bug garden designed by Kwantlen students for Falaise Park has been completed, although installation has not yet proceeded. These types of supportive infrastructure contribute to ecosystems that support food growing and are thus included as valuable food assets. Likewise, apiaries and mason bee lodge installations in community gardens are important components of food growing in the city.

The Park Board has several composting facilities in its works yards, but these currently limit feedstock to organic materials produced in horticultural and arboricultural maintenance, and not food scraps. Compost produced in these facilities is returned to park landscapes, used for arts and cultural activities where appropriate (e.g. large pieces of wood), or used by the UBC biomass energy plant. Three community centres currently have organic waste collection (including food) as a pilot program for community centre staff and users, and this will be rolled out to most other community centres over the next 6-12 months.



Lunch program volunteers at Renfrew Park

CASE STUDY COMMUNITY CENTRE KITCHENS

Among the community centers with active kitchens, the kitchen is seen as a place for intergenerational and intercultural knowledge sharing and skill building. For example, at **Strathcona Community Centre** staff say that food skills are a basic necessity for addressing food insecurity among youth who provide meals to younger siblings. Food is also a way to engage seniors in social activity while providing nourishment. Several community centres run programs that reduce community food waste by collecting and redistributing food to community through programming.

These centers are looking for ways to increase the knowledge they share with the community about food through programming focused on gardening, food preparation and nutritional consumption of food. Some centres like **Renfrew Community Centre** have a sizable kitchen equipped with a stove, a refrigerator and a dishwasher. At Renfrew, the kitchen is used regularly by the community lunch program, cooking classes for adults and children and for skill building workshops such as canning. However, there is opportunity to expand programming in the space to get more use out of the kitchen by getting more community into the kitchen, and many community centers are excited to increase food programming.

FACILITIES

Community Centre Kitchens

All 24 community centres distributed throughout the city contain at least one kitchen facility, with larger centres like Britannia and Kensington Community Centres equipped with four kitchens each. Survey results reveal that kitchen facilities vary in condition, capacity, licensing, and utilization. Each centre has individual policies dealing with access for rental and community groups that affect its ability to be fully utilized.

Community Centre Support Spaces

Office, meeting, activity and storage spaces at community centres provide much needed support to local food initiatives. Food programs and community food organizations utilise a variety of spaces within centres. Britannia, Hastings, Strathcona, and Trout Lake centres offer access to office/administrative space to neighbourhood food networks; gardening space outside of Hastings Community Centre supports food programs there; and programming spaces are made available for community food organizations at West End, among others.

Central Warehouse

The Park Board currently operates the Central Warehouse to leverage better contracts from suppliers to purchase food for their dining and retail food operations, including its concession stands and

golf course clubhouse restaurants. Supplies purchased from its five largest contracts total \$431,000.

In the past, the Central Warehouse had sourced whole potatoes for its concessions from a Lower Mainland supplier and concessions could process 60,000 pounds of potatoes. Currently concessions purchase pre-cut frozen French fries in most of their operations; however, two locations use whole potatoes that will be purchased locally when in season.

Concessions

There are 13 concession stands operated by the Park Board in contract with independent concessionaires on beach and park sites, of which 12 kitchens are used to cut select produce (lettuce, tomatoes, lemon, onions) on-site. Sandwiches and salads are prepared at Lumberman's Arch and distributed to the other concessions each day. Popular menu items include processed fare: French fries, hamburgers, chicken burgers, veggie burgers, hotdogs, fish and chips, ice cream and potato chips.

Beach concessions operate seasonally, serving an estimated 55,000 customers each year. Food purchases total over \$600,000 (\$613,500 in 2011-12) annually, with 15% supplied through the Central Warehouse. While several concession stands remain open in the off-season, many are vacant through the winter months. All concession operations incorporate sustainable sourcing practices.

Restaurants

There are currently 11 privately operated restaurants on Park Board land that are operating on through lease agreements. Many of them already incorporate sustainable sourcing practices. Many have seasonal menu items that feature meats and produce from local and urban farms, while nearly all restaurants participate in the seafood certification program Ocean Wise. A few restaurants also have waste management protocols to divert food and packaging waste.

The Park Board operates a full service restaurant with catering services at each of its three golf course clubhouses. All menu items are prepared on site in their commercial kitchen and barbeque. Ordering for all three restaurants is completed by on-site coordinators through a centralized system, and food comes from one main supplier in order to reduce the number of deliveries and to have a better way to track local products and environmental impacts. A policy regarding Ocean Wise recommended seafood products and fair trade coffee is in place to guide purchases; however, menus do not highlight these commitments.

Farmers Markets and Community Food Markets

A number of Vancouver's farmers markets are located on or adjacent to Park Board land and facilities. Farmers markets located



▲ *Five farmers markets are located on or adjacent to Park Board land, with a considerable selection of locally grown and processed foods for city residents.*

in parking lots of three community centres (Trout Lake, Kitsilano, Hillcrest) currently operate under special events permits, issued by the Park Board for a fee. Two farmers markets are located jointly on City- and Park Board land: Thornton Park and Nelson Park; the latter makes use of a Park Board water connection recently installed at the site. Two of these farmers markets offer complimentary bicycle valet service and food scraps drop-offs during market hours.

Field houses & other facilities

There are field house facilities in 69 of Vancouver's parks that were initially built

to provide washrooms, change rooms, storage spaces and live-in caretakers suites to support park users. They now serve a number of additional functions including: meeting and activity space for residents and organizations, studio space for artist groups, and storage space for sports users. As spaces in the field houses become vacant, Park Board staff can find opportunities to support local food efforts in combination with other potential users and uses. Some of the current artist residencies have a local food component to their projects and programming.

Sunset Nursery, Van Dusen Gardens, and the Park Board's works yards are well-utilized assets. Opportunities to include a food component in their operations could bolster the Park Board's capacity to support local food systems.



CAPACITY AND PROGRAMS

Community Centre Leadership

Vancouver's 24 community centres function as important neighbourhood hubs, serving residents with social, recreational, and cultural services. Many centres are already playing key roles in community food efforts and can provide leadership to mentor other centres to expand their food related initiatives. Community centres are certainly well positioned to support community food efforts, as many centres are already involved in food growing and cooking initiatives.

Community Centre Programming

A diverse range of food programs and activities are offered at a number of centres, determined by centre programmers based on demand and need. As such, some centres offer a wide range of food programs which can include cooking workshops, community lunches, food recovery operations, gardening activities, community potlucks, celebrations, educational classes, among others. In other centres, food programming is comparably less pronounced. The Park Board relies on its programmers, coordinators, and instructors that have the expertise, skills, and motivation to buttress its current food efforts. Identifying local needs and finding ways to support staff engaged in the work will be essential to expanding local capacities.

Community Centre Partnerships

The capacities of some centres to support food systems depend on partnerships with community organizations. Ties with nearby Neighbourhood Houses, religious, and secular organizations are common and greatly enhance mutual abilities to operate food initiatives by connecting resources, increasing scale and broadening community reach. In some cases community centre staff also sit on steering committees of community food organizations which allows for better coordination and opportunities for collaboration to support local food networks.

Staff Horticultural Expertise

The Park Board staff involved in park operations has substantial expertise and knowledge that could help support local food systems. Employees at Sunset Nursery, Van Dusen, Bloedel Conservancy, and the works yards have extensive experience in gardening, arboriculture, and horticulture that would benefit efforts to grow food within the parks and recreation system. The extent of expertise related specifically to food production is currently unknown.

*Events like the Stone Soup Festival highlight the importance of community partnerships that make food celebrations across the city possible.
Britannia Community Centre
Photo courtesy of Grandview-Woodlands Food Connection*







*Plants climbing along home-made trellises
at Strathcona Community Garden*

3 VISION, PRINCIPLES & GOALS

The vision, principles and goals used in the Park Board's LFAP are already articulated in City of Vancouver Policy. The vision and principles come from the Vancouver Food Charter, adopted by Vancouver City Council in February 2007. The goals come from What Feeds Us: The Vancouver Food Strategy adopted by Vancouver City Council in January 2013. These high level policy statements were tested by the LFAP Task Force and Working Groups and determined to provide excellent context for the Park Board's own action plan.

VISION

The City of Vancouver is committed to a just and sustainable food system that:

- » Contributes to the economic, ecological and social wellbeing of our city and region;
- » Encourages personal, business and government food practices that foster local production and protect our natural and human resources;
- » Recognizes access to safe, sufficient, culturally appropriate and nutritious food as a basic human right for all Vancouver residents;
- » Reflects the dialogue between the community, government, and all sectors of the food system; and
- » Celebrates Vancouver's multicultural food traditions.

PRINCIPLES

There are five principles that guide the City's food system work. These are listed here, followed by a brief description of how they can be applied in the context of the Park Board.

1. **Community economic development.** Locally based food systems enhance Vancouver's economy. Greater reliance on local food systems strengthens our local and regional economies, creates employment, and increases food security.
2. **Ecological health.** A whole system approach to food protects our natural resources, reduces and redirects food waste, and contributes to the environmental stability and wellbeing of our local, regional and global communities.
3. **Social justice.** Food is a basic human right. All residents need accessible, affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate food. Children in particular require adequate amounts of nutritious food for normal growth and learning.
4. **Collaboration and participation.** Sustainable food systems encourage civic engagement, promote responsibility and strengthen communities. Community food security improves when local government collaborates with community groups, businesses and other levels of government on sound food system planning, policies and practices.
5. **Celebration.** Sharing food is a fundamental human experience. Food brings people together in celebrations of community and diversity.

THE VANCOUVER FOOD CHARTER

describes the unique contributions that a public agency can make to create a just and sustainable food system that were also used as principles in guiding the LFAP. These include:

- » Be leaders in municipal and regional food-related policies and programs
- » Support regional farmers and food producers
- » Expand urban agriculture and food recovery opportunities
- » Promote composting and the preservation of healthy soil
- » Encourage humane treatment of animals raised for food
- » Support sustainable agriculture and preserve farm land resources
- » Improve access to healthy and affordable foods
- » Increase the health of all members of our City of Vancouver talk together and teach each other about food
- » Celebrate our city's diverse food cultures



*The Corn Festival at
Britannia Community Centre*

CASE STUDY

FOOD EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

The annual **Sustenance Festival at Roundhouse Community Centre** engages community in learning about local and sustainable food. The center draws on their art and culture mandate to build an exciting event that includes cultural exchange of food and food art. During the festival, community members learn about Vancouver's local food scene and the many resources and initiatives the city has to offer. During the week of the Sustenance Festival, innovative food focused programming is offered. People are encouraged to learn how to make cheese, cook Indian food and harvest weeds for salad.

Another example of exciting and successful food events are **Britannia Community Centre's annual Corn Festival and Stone Soup Festival**. For community centers that do not have a sustainable and healthy food focus, an event is a great way to engage community and gauge interest in food related programs at the Community Center..



Strathcona Community Garden

GOALS

There are five goals articulated in the **VANCOUVER FOOD STRATEGY**, which are adopted for the LFAP:

1. Support food friendly neighbourhoods. Strengthen physical food assets and infrastructure to create resilient neighbourhood food systems that are uniquely designed to respond to the context of each neighbourhood.
2. Empower residents to take action. Strengthen participation and knowledge of residents towards belonging and inclusion in the city through enhancing human capital and community capacity.
3. Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents. Create communities and neighbourhoods that are food secure which includes: having access to basic and healthy goods; being socially inclusive; enhancing physical and mental wellbeing; and protecting natural ecology.
4. Make food a centerpiece of Vancouver's green economy. Support the creation of food related green jobs throughout the food system through localizing the supply chain and emphasizing skill building and job creation opportunities in the food sector.
5. Advocate for a just and sustainable food system with partners and at all levels of government. Strengthen relationships and partnerships at all scales of the food system including households, neighbourhoods, city, region, and beyond while using the unique tools and levers available at the municipal level.

TARGET

The overall target used to monitor progress on achievement of the LFAP will be the local food target articulated in the Greenest City Action Plan:

- » Increase city and neighbourhood food assets by 50% over 2010 levels by the year 2020.




◀ "Cooking with Care" cooking workshop at Britannia Community Centre, run by Grandview-Woodlands Food Connection.

Photo Courtesy of GWFC

4 TAKING ACTION

The Local Food Action Plan includes four priorities, 8 goals and 55 actions to focus the work of the Park Board over the next 5 years. Each priority area includes objectives, a brief description of the priority area, and sub-metrics to help evaluate progress on the goals and priorities. Actions are either quick starts (projects that were initiated while planning work was underway), 0-2 year actions, or 3-5 year actions.

The Task Force and Working Groups were given a significant challenge – to keep the actions focused and feasible while also stretching the Park Board to more fully realize its potential as an important partner in local food projects. With this in mind, the task force developed criteria for prioritizing actions (see Appendix B). Work to identify staff leads and resources required for implementation will be required to ensure that the plans' implementation is done effectively.



Farmer-fresh produce sold at
Vancouver's farmers market

PRIORITY 1: INCREASE PHYSICAL FOOD ASSETS

OBJECTIVES

Create and unlock land- and built infrastructure to enable growing, processing, distribution, programming and capacity building in support of sustainable local food systems. The Park Board is relatively asset-rich, and this section is about a fuller utilization of this infrastructure to support sustainable and local food efforts by the whole community.

DESCRIPTION

Food infrastructure and assets includes community gardens, fruit and nut trees, community kitchens, pollinator gardens, urban farms, edible landscaping, office and storage space, and any other land- or built space that has the potential to support local food projects. There are three main ways in which the Park Board can make its infrastructure more supportive of local food projects including: i) changes to policy and practice; ii) supporting increased cultivation of food on its lands; and iii) supporting food projects through its built infrastructure.

METRIC

- » Number of new food assets, by type.

FORSTBAUER FARM
Bunch chard

\$ 7.50 / bunch

GOAL 1.1

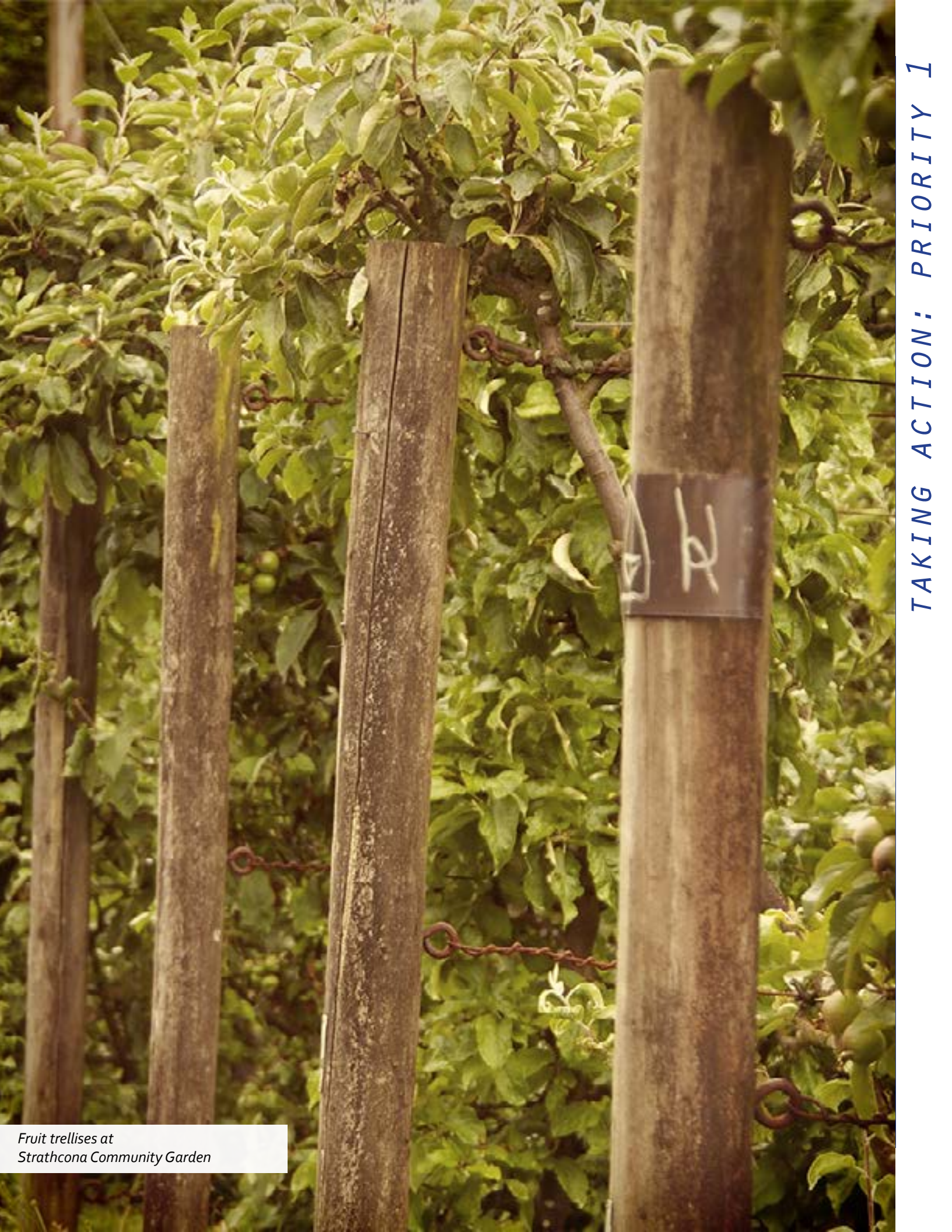
Create new and adjust existing policies and practices to improve access to Park Board food related infrastructure and assets.

Number	Actions	Timeframe
1	Update community garden license agreements to ensure they adequately address infrastructural needs, safety, accessibility, sustainability, and community involvement.	Quickstart (complete)
2	Assemble and share City of Vancouver and Park Board food asset mapping data on Vancouver’s Open Data catalogue to make information publicly accessible.	Quickstart (complete)
3	Work towards alignment of Park Board and City of Vancouver policies for farmers markets, including permit fees and lengths and other requirements.	Quickstart (underway)
4	Outline required processes for utility hookups at sites to accommodate farmers markets and community food markets on VPB land better, as parks are redeveloped in priority farmers market and community food hub locations	0-2 years
5	Conduct a community garden policy and guideline review and update to include additional types of urban agriculture projects, ease and streamline processes for application and implementation, and to clarify public consultation processes.	0-2 years
6	Considering other park uses, develop criteria and conduct a land inventory to identify: underutilised land; potential food tree planting sites (parks, boulevards); landscaping beds that could be transformed to food/pollinator gardens; potential urban farming locations; and other potential sites for food growing. Use this to focus future food growing initiatives and collaborations.	0-2 years
7	Work with City of Vancouver to create long-term strategic plan for farmers markets in Vancouver, identify opportunities for infrastructure to support farmers markets and other community events, and increase the number of farmers markets in Vancouver.	3-5 years
8	Work with City of Vancouver, Vancouver School Board, and Vancouver Coastal Health to identify food assets and gaps, and identify locations and asset types that Park Board is uniquely situated to provide.	3-5 years

GOAL 1.2

Support growing more food on Park Board lands

Number	Actions	Timeframe
9	Build a pollinator garden as a pilot integrating native, edible pollinator-friendly plants in place of ornamentals.	Quickstart (complete)
10	Approve and build at least two new community gardens.	Quickstart (complete)
11	Pilot planting of fruit trees on one city boulevard site.	Quickstart (complete)
12	Increase planting of fruit and nut trees in neighbourhood parks.	0-2 years
13	Extend range of possible food assets that can be applied for through the annual community garden call for expressions of interest (eg. bee keeping, orchards, food forests, collaborative gardens, cultural food assets).	0-2 years
14	Establish framework/criteria to incorporate food growing opportunities in different types on underutilised spaces based on inventory (action 6), and recruit partners to grow in these spaces.	3-5 years
15	Increase planting of edible and pollinator plants, and culturally diverse and indigenous plants, in place of ornamental plants throughout Park Board landscape.	3-5 years
16	Increase planting of fruit and nut trees in the street tree system, including development of capacity, management practices and partnerships to address challenges.	3-5 years
17	Pilot a permaculture design and installation, focused on supporting local food systems, guided by local cultures, including First Nations cultures, and designed appropriately for a Vancouver park.	3-5 years



*Fruit trellises at
Strathcona Community Garden*



Canning workshop at Renfrew Park Community Centre run by partner organization, Renfrew-Collingwood Food Security Institute
 Photo courtesy of RC-FSI

GOAL 1.3

Support creation of new facilities that support local food, as well as adapt and/or better utilize existing facilities

Number	Actions	Timeframe
18	Work with City staff to improve farmers market infrastructure in at least one park site as a pilot project.	Quickstart (complete)
19	Develop criteria to identify fieldhouses with best potential to support local food efforts.	Quickstart (underway)
20	Define what a closed-loop food system might look like for a Park Board facility (i.e. connecting food growing, procurement, processing, access/distribution, programs, and composting at one site), and identify best practices in Park Board facilities that demonstrate closed-loop food system principles.	Quickstart (underway)
21	Implement appropriate food projects in field houses (identified in action 19) in collaboration with community partners.	0-2 years
22	Inventory existing Park Board facilities to find potential spaces and uses for food programming and initiatives including: kitchens, storage, activity spaces. Track current conditions, capacities, utilization rates, barriers to usage, and food safety procedures.	0-2 years
23	Support the development of food safety regulations and site-specific procedures to enable better use of kitchen facilities for community food programming in community centres. Coordinate with Vancouver Coastal Health to improve compliance on kitchen inspections and food premise permits where possible.	0-2 years



Number	Actions	Timeframe
24	Investigate opportunities to pilot a cost-effective FoodSafe certification program to enable greater staff and volunteer participation in food programs.	0-2 years
25	Develop guidance document for park and facility construction and renovations that support local food assets (i.e. kitchen facilities, storage, growing space, rooftop gardens, infrastructure for farmers markets).	0-2 years
26	Pilot a demonstration closed-loop food system at one Park Board facility.	0-2 years
27	Establish a bake oven pilot project in a neighbourhood park with supportive social and physical infrastructure. Develop and implement oversight strategy to address on-going opportunities and challenges of bake oven operation.	0-2 years
28	Develop programming and implement demonstration closed-loop food systems at Park Board facilities where appropriate, based on success of pilot	3-5 years
29	Investigate opportunities for Sunset Nursery, Van Dusen Gardens, and Stanley Park to support and develop local capacity of food systems, and consider contributions to larger scale food system through educational opportunities.	3-5 years



PRIORITY 2: SUSTAINABLE & LOCAL FOOD ECONOMIES

OBJECTIVES

Harness procurement practices, permits, and other economic powers in support of sustainable local food goals. Support businesses and social enterprises involved in the provision of healthy, sustainable local food within Vancouver and the region. Improve access to healthy, sustainable local food at Park Board facilities for everyone, with a focus on vulnerable communities.

DESCRIPTION

The Park Board directly purchases a significant amount of food each year through our concession and community centres, and there is great potential to use the Park Board's dollars to support sustainable and local food systems. There are 13 leases with food services operators in parks and facilities, and food is directly sold through 16 Park Board operated concessions and cafeterias. The Park Board has an important role to play in supporting a sustainable local food economy through its procurement practices, lease agreements, and programs and services that provide food access.

METRICS

- » Percentage of food provided by Vancouver Park Board operated food services with local content.
- » Percentage of leasee's with active commitments to sustainable local food procurement and compostable packaging.

GOAL 2.1

Increase locally-sourced, higher-nutrition, and sustainably-packaged food sold and processed in Park Board system through collaboration, procurement rules, permits and licensing, and other tools.

Number	Actions	Timeframe
30	Pilot incorporation of fresh fruit and/or vegetable offerings in coordination with Central Warehouse and concession stand operators.	Quickstart (underway)
31	Enter into new contract with concessions food provider, and include a target of 40% local food.	Quickstart (complete)
32	Collaborate with City of Vancouver to formulate a definition on local sourcing that will guide development of procurement standards and vending contracts.	0-2 years
33	Coordinate with City of Vancouver to develop and roll out new procurement guidelines that articulate or weight bid evaluation in favour of local and sustainable food and composting/waste management. Build in community goodwill on some of the bigger contracts.	0-2 years
34	Collaborate with City of Vancouver to develop potential community food market locations in Park Board system. A community food market is a small-scale farmers market that often provides fresh, healthy food at cost in locations with vulnerable communities that have challenges with accessing healthy and culturally diverse food.	0-2 years
35	Partner with the City of Vancouver and other public sector organizations to develop an aggregated purchasing framework in support of sustainable local food and compostable packaging in order to leverage better prices and allow community centres to participate.	3-5 years
36	Substantially increase healthy, sustainable, culturally diverse, and local food options available at concessions, and through Central Warehouse, and transform their operations to reflect healthier and more sustainable eating.	3-5 years

GOAL 2.2

Encourage businesses operating in Park Board facilities to purchase local and sustainable food, use compostable packaging, and compost organic waste

Number	Actions	Timeframe
37	Implement food carts in Park Board sites, and encourage local and sustainable ingredients included on the menu.	Quickstart (complete)
38	Gather best practices from food businesses leasing Park Board space on their current sustainable operations, including healthy, sustainable local food and compostable packaging.	0-2 years
39	Include requirement in new lease agreements and lease renewals to increase purchasing of local and sustainable food and compostable packaging, regularly reporting back on progress.	0-2 years
40	Substantially increase healthy, sustainable and local food options available through all contracted food services operating in community centres (i.e. cafés, vending machines), and transform their operations to reflect healthier, more sustainable, and culturally diverse eating.	3-5 years



Beach
Café

Sunset Beach



TAKING ACTION: PRIORITY 2



◀ The homegrown vegetable competition at the Renfrew Ravine Moon Festival held at Slocan Park prompts a neighbourly conversation. The event hosted by Still Moon Arts & the Renfrew Park Community Centre strengthens local partnerships in the neighbourhood. Photo courtesy of RC-FSI

PRIORITY 3: ENGAGED & CAPACITY- RICH NETWORKS

OBJECTIVES

Enhance staff and community food literacy, skills, and capacity through food related programming and partnerships. Create robust, resilient and meaningful collaborations and partnerships with community members and organizations. Actively contribute to Vancouver’s sustainable local food movement.

DESCRIPTION

This is a people-centred concept, where engagement and capacity building happens through empowerment, connecting people and communities, coordinating efforts, and developing leadership. Bringing people together around sustainable local food is an opportunity to share information, work collaboratively, understand barriers, and think systematically together. The Park Board can engage and build capacity in sustainable local food systems both within its own staff as well as through the programs and services that are offered to, and with, communities.

METRIC:

- » Participation in food programs offered by Park Board.



The bounty after a day of berry picking - Photo courtesy of Seasons of Food

CASE STUDY

FOOD PROGRAMMING PARTNERSHIPS

Through a series of community driven initiatives, the **Hastings Community Centre** is producing, preparing and serving local food and composting on site. Specific projects include a new teaching garden, the family focused “Seasons of Food” hands on educational program, the Family Resource Centre that focuses on engaging children in growing, preparing and eating food from the garden and the on-site composting bin. Through these initiatives the community is engaging at every level of the food system.

However, these compelling initiatives are challenged by insufficient resources to sustain their activities. Popular demand for programming has increased the workload of coordinators and volunteers beyond capacity and the team is looking for innovative ways to manage and maintain the teaching garden for use by the whole community

GOAL 3.1

Enhance coordination and resourcing of food initiatives and programming within Park Board

Number	Actions	Timeframe
41	Conduct a food-related skills and interests inventory of Park Board staff in all departments.	0-2 years
42	Leverage existing planning, arts, culture and environment, volunteer coordination, grant making, fundraising, horticulture, and arboriculture staff to support local food initiatives.	0-2 years
43	Reinforce access to healthy, culturally diverse, local, and sustainable food as part a Park Board priority. Consider increasing inclusion of food component in existing work with youth, seniors, families, and cultural communities to be more representative in each community centre’s core programming. Build upon such initiatives as “Stay Active, Eat Healthy” program in these efforts.	0-2 years
44	Develop operational plan to ensure staff in relevant park operations and recreation programming is trained and empowered to support implementation of local food plan.	0-2 years
45	Develop operational plan to ensure staff in relevant park operations and recreation programming is trained and empowered to support implementation of local food plan.	3-5 years

GOAL 3.2

Develop and support programming that integrates local food in ways that help fulfill a wide range of social and cultural goals, ensuring programs are accessible to all members of the community

Number	Actions	Timeframe
46	Inventory existing food programs in community centres to understand expected outcomes, participant demographics, inclusion of vulnerable populations, gaps in programming, and what programs are most wanted and needed.	0-2 years
47	Work with community partners to create program development guides, resources, workshops, and other training, education and mentorship programs to enhance food program delivery. Focus on a range of programming that builds diverse capacities (e.g. food skills, employment training, celebrations)	0-2 years
48	Encourage, cultivate, support, and increase awareness of community-led and place-based food projects through Park Board's Neighbourhood Matching Fund.	0-2 years
49	Incorporate community food markets into community centre programming at appropriate centres, and with an aim to improve access to healthy, sustainable, culturally diverse, and local food options for all Vancouver residents.	3-5 years



CASE STUDY

COMPOSTING AT COMMUNITY CENTRES

Creekside Community Centre is reducing the waste they send to the landfill. They are piloting the City of Vancouver Zero Waste Program with a three bin recycling system that is available for use by the public and staff. Composting bins are also being used by staff and there is interest in extending the program for public use. The staff are enthusiastic about the program and some have reported that active engagement has been successful in educating the public on how to use the bins.

However, there is concern around contamination of the bins and over use of the bins by high-rise residents. Creekside Community Center has explored one potential remedy for this. Last year, the center hosted a successful weekly home food scraps drop off for residence in the area. The program is not running at present, but there is interest in building and extending these partnerships with composting organizations at Creekside and other community centers in high rise neighbourhoods.

PRIORITY 4: SOIL GENERATION

OBJECTIVES

Fully recover food waste and packaging resources for conversion back to healthy soils. Seek out opportunities for Park Board to become an operation that accepts organic materials for composting and returns nutrient rich soil back to the landscapes that it manages.

DESCRIPTION

Park Board operations are great at turning leaf mulch back to soil in the parks. High quality, useable wood from tree pruning is given to artists, and less useable wood waste is used for biomass energy production at the University of British Columbia as well as for mulch. Food waste is more challenging, and the Park Board is just beginning to find methods to collect and process food and packaging waste produced in food service locations and community centres. A healthy food system relies on nutrient rich, healthy soils, and the Park Board can play a meaningful role in transforming organic waste back into soil.

METRIC

- » Volume of organics composted at Park Board facilities.



GOAL 4.1

Enhance coordination and resourcing of food initiatives and programming within Park Board

Number	Actions	Timeframe
50	Pilot zero waste stations, including composting, at three community centres in collaboration with City of Vancouver.	Quickstart (complete)
51	Require compostable packaging at all concessions, including take-out containers and cutlery.	0-2 years
52	Coordinate with City of Vancouver to implement waste management systems, including education programming, to handle food waste and compostables from all community centres and concession stands.	0-2 years
53	Analyse opportunities to reduce food waste at source, including the Central Warehouse and other food storage and preparation operations.	0-2 years
54	Form a working group to study the potential for Park Board facilities and operations to support composting more broadly in the neighbourhoods that they serve, as well as throughout the park system, where other composting programs are unavailable (e.g. compost drop-off sites, links to composting in Park Board horticulture operations, waste collected in parks)	3-5 years
55	Require compostable packaging at all Park Board facilities and investigate opportunities to sell, and incentivize use of, reusable containers at all food service outlets.	3-5 years





IMPLEMENTATION

The LFAP outlines clear actions and time frames for the Park Board to work toward in its aim to support community based food production by contributing to the development of neighbourhood and city-wide food infrastructure programs and assets. There are four critical components to ensuring successful implementation of the LFAP.

First, the staff responsible for implementation of each action needs to be identified and fully engaged in project planning and delivery. Park Planning with Arts, Culture and Environment will take the lead on coordinating implementation, and will need to be given required support and resources to take local food on more fully as a priority. Staff from community centres, special events, fundraising,

communications, horticulture, arboriculture, park development, park superintendents, revenue services, and others will need to be actively involved in implementation. It is recommended that a LFAP staff team be brought together to coordinate implementation and remain accountable to each action. Park Board staff should continue to be actively engaged in City-led food planning and implementation.

Second, the Park Board will need to engage in new partnerships, and nurture existing partnerships, to implement the LFAP. Many of the actions, particularly those related to stewarding new food growing assets and developing and delivering new community centre programming, require strong collaboration with community partners and volunteers. New methods need



to be employed for engaging volunteers, removing barriers to greater participation of volunteers, and for encouraging creative and innovative local food projects. The Park Board will need to become more nimble and opportunistic in order to take advantage of emerging opportunities and collaborations.

Third, being accountable to this target and to the actions in the plan are of critical importance to successful implementation. Monitoring and evaluation of progress will be done against the primary target of increasing local food assets by 50% over 2010 levels, by 2020. This metric is reported annually as part of Greenest City Action Plan reporting, and the sub-metrics included in the LFAP will also be monitored on an annual cycle. It is recommended that staff report back to the Board on implementation

progress within two years of adopting the LFAP. A review and potential renewal of the LFAP should be initiated in the fourth year of the plan so that clear objectives, goals and actions continue after the five year term of the LFAP has finished.

Finally, appropriate planning and allocation of capital and operating budgets needs to be made in order to develop, operate and sustain the implementation of the LFAP. The 2015-2017 capital plan should consider an increased investment in sustainable local food, commensurate with what will be required to implement the LFAP. It is expected that operating budget priorities will need to be shifted rather than increased, in order to reflect this change to Park Board priority and in light of other priority initiatives.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A REFERENCED MATERIAL

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APPENDIX B

ACTION PLANNING CRITERIA

The Task Force developed a set of criteria through which the long list of potential actions was prioritized. About ten prioritization criteria were brought forward, and used to analyse what the most important elements of the actions in the plan would be. A rich discussion of potential criteria was had, and these possibilities considered the importance of local versus more global impacts of the actions, how replicable they would be for other cities, what “significant impact” of an action meant in the case of this plan, and others. The Task Force determined that two sets of prioritization criteria were needed: one for the quick start actions, and a second set for the rest of the actions in the plan. These are described below.

Quickstart Criteria (actions while planning):

- » Can identify specific targets, requirements, and responsible parties;
- » Able to start right away, show significant progress by July 2013, and complete within a year;
- » Have existing mandate and resources that can be mobilized now (i.e. staff, volunteers, funding, capital); and
- » Will result in significant positive impact on attaining local and sustainable food goals.

Action Plan Criteria (0-5 years):

- » Will result in significant positive impact, where “significant” is inclusive and comprehensive and means: appropriate reach, capacity-building, replicable, inspirational, teachable, inclusive, matches vision and goals, and ability to sustain for the long-term;
- » Resources are available and/or are feasible to secure including: staff time, expertise, information, knowledge, funds, volunteers, ability to assign accountability; and
- » Has excellent leverage potential and synergy with other projects and efforts, both within Park Board and with community partners.

Once the criteria were established, Task Force members went through the long list of potential actions one by one, and analysed them based on the priorities that were established. Many actions were refined, revised, grouped together, and in some cases removed where they didn’t meet enough of the criteria. The result is a highly focused, feasible, and strategic set of actions that form the skeleton of the Local Food Action Plan.