

CENTRAL CARIBOO
**COMMUNITY
FOOD
HUB**

PROJECT
assessment

BRIANNA VAN DE WIJNGAARD
PROJECT COORDINATOR
SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL
OF WILLIAMS LAKE AND AREA
E: FOODHUB@WLSPC.CA

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Without your invaluable input and experience, we could not have even begun to paint a picture of food security challenges and solutions in our community. Thank you!

I would also like to acknowledge that this report was written from - and with great appreciation of - the traditional, unceded, and beautiful territory of the Secwepemc Nation and the T'exelc, Xatsull, and ?Esdilagh people.

PROJECT OVERVIEW



GOALS & OBJECTIVES

On July 1st, 2021, the Williams Lake Social Planning Council entered into an agreement with United Way BC to launch a Community Food Hub project in our region. This is a first for both the Social Planning Council and our community, and we couldn't be more excited about the potential.

United Way has a long history of working on food security in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley regions, but since the start of the COVID pandemic, United Way recognized the shifting and increasing need across the province for "building a healthier, more equitable and sustainable food system". As unemployment, supply chain disruptions, and food costs have risen, so too have the barriers to healthy, culturally-appropriate food, especially for vulnerable populations. Climate change impacts, such as the devastating flooding of the province's most productive agricultural land in November of this year, add an even greater need for a sustainable local food system.

So they launched the United Way Food Security Initiative, which supports these United Way Regional Community Food Hub projects. The United Way Regional Community Food Hubs act as a sort of ecosystem of non-profit partners, residents, businesses, all levels of government, the agricultural sector and other funders "working collaboratively to best increase the food security of our communities." These Food Hubs are stewarded by an existing organization in the community willing to take it on. In our case, that is the Williams Lake Social Planning Council.

There are now 16 United Way Regional Community Food Hubs in the province, the northernmost being the Central Cariboo, and they all have very inspiring projects on the go. While they all focus on different areas of food security, they have one thing in common: they are partnership-driven. No one project is successful on its own. It relies on collaboration between many community partners with the shared goal of strengthening sustainable food security.

The Central Cariboo Community Food Hub project goal is to bring together a range of skilled community partners to develop a regional food hub of resources that will focus on integrating and coordinating food security solutions and maximize food access for all. We will achieve this by:

- Uniting a coordinated network of community partners
- Building capacity and strengthening this network by increasing knowledge and awareness about the drivers of food insecurity, and how we can find solutions
- Identifying community-driven solutions to food insecurity while building a strong regional food system
- Creating a sustainable foundation for the Hub's future operations

LONG TERM VISION:

Through community partnerships, create a hub that will focus on integrating and coordinating food security and food system activities that will maximize utilization of available food, and increase access to healthy and local food for all.

YEAR 1 GOALS:

- Reduce food insecurity while increasing local food security through a strong regional food system
- Increase access to affordable, nutritious, appropriate foods by vulnerable populations
- Partners work on, and bring awareness to, the systemic drivers of food insecurity
- Increased local food production and all local food available for consumption is utilized to feed communities and households

OBJECTIVES:

- build and solidify partner relationships
- establish an operational plan
- map assets, opportunities, and priorities.

YEAR 1 OUTCOMES:

- 2 community partner events to
 - map assets and opportunities and
 - identify priorities to strengthen household food security and regional food system
- Establish Food Hub operational and partnership model, and at least 5 organizational partnership commitments
- Secure funding for future Hub operations (minimum 1 year with goal of 5 years)
- Maximize distribution of available, healthy food to vulnerable populations



WHAT IS FOOD INSECURITY?

There are 2 areas of food insecurity that the Community Food Hub will concentrate on in creating a collaborative, mutually-beneficial and effective operations and strategic plan:

Household food security:

The Food and Agriculture Organization's food security definition is when "all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."

Community food security:

"a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice."

The concept of community food security is relatively new, but you can see the interrelation with household food security: in both cases, all people at all times must have adequate access to nutritious food, on the individual and community level. The main difference being that community food security requires that the food system from which it is sourced is sustainable, and positively contributes to a community's resiliency and ability to feed itself. This inherently means development and support for a local food system, while advocating for equitable access to food for all community members.

DRIVERS OF FOOD INSECURITY

Household food insecurity is a nation-wide health and community well-being issue that varies across provinces. The Canadian government has been monitoring household food insecurity since the mid-1990s, and using the Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM) since 2005. The HFSSM uses self-reporting to determine whether a household has "uncertain, insufficient or inadequate food access, availability and utilization due to limited financial resources" and the compromised and unhealthy eating patterns that develop as a result. The most recent Canadian Community Health Survey, which incorporates the HFSSM survey results, was in 2017-18, which estimated that 1 in 8 Canadian households was food insecure. This amounts to over 4.4 million Canadians. In BC, it was 12.4% of our population.

Who Are the 4.4 million food insecure Canadians?

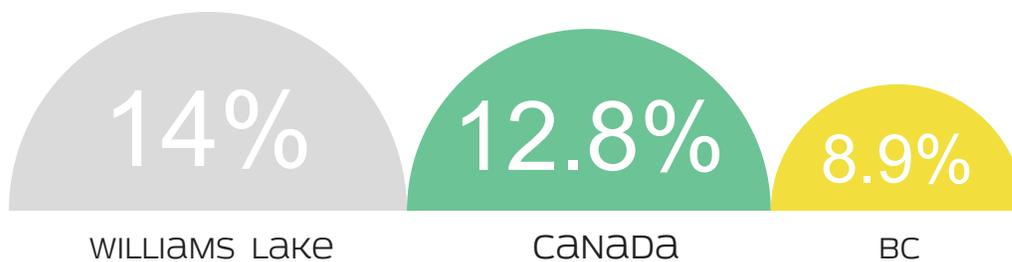


- Food insecurity is not due to a lack of cooking knowledge or budgeting: analysis of food insecure households showed that their cooking skills are about the same as food secure households, and they are 4x as likely to budget when buying groceries.
- 65% of those who are food insecure have employment income. This means that wages are either too low, and/or work is precarious.
- Those who rent their homes are twice as likely to be food insecure than those who own their homes and pay a mortgage.
- Due to systemic racism, and black and indigenous communities are among the highest rates of the food insecure: just over 28%
- 1/3 of single mother households are food insecure. This makes 1 in 6 Canadian youth under 18 affected by food insecurity
- Households with seniors' incomes (65+ demographic) are the least food insecure group (6.8%) due in part to pension programs
- Those on social assistance are the most food insecure group in Canada: 60.4% of those surveyed

The research into household food insecurity is pretty clear: those 4.4 million Canadians are food insecure because of insufficient income due to low wages or precarious work, inadequate social assistance programs, and marginalization.

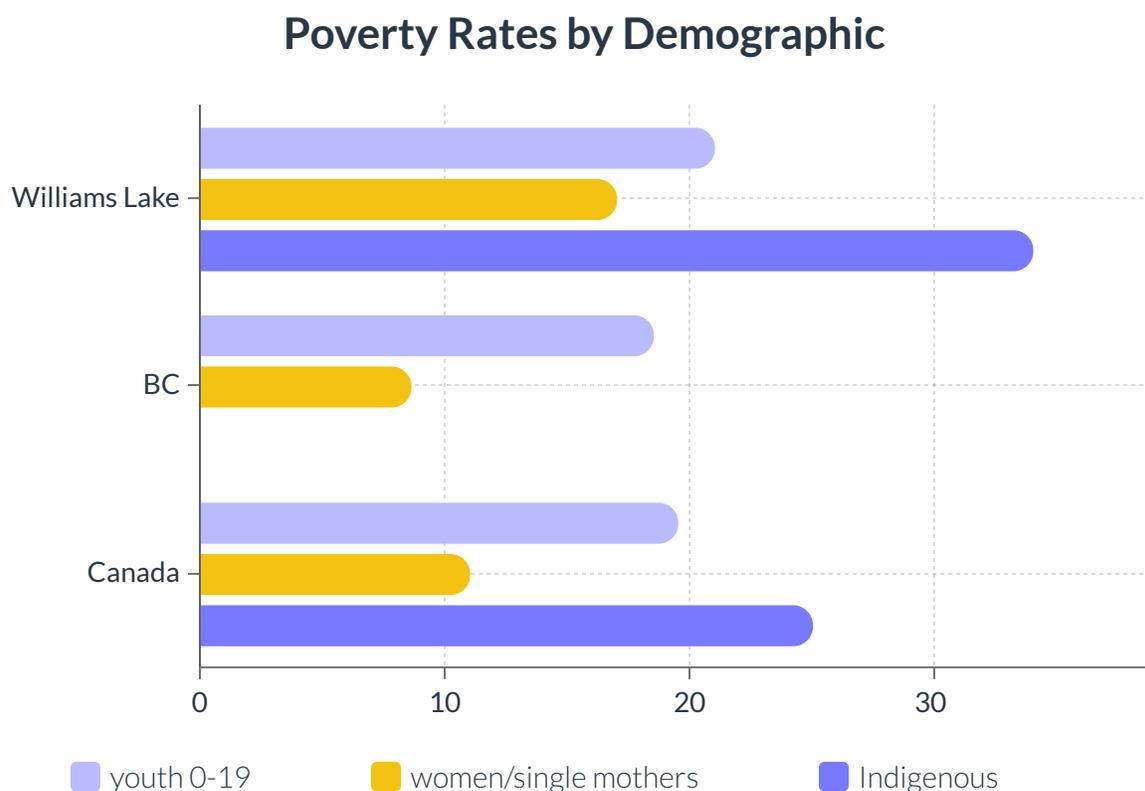
With insufficient income being the primary driver of household food insecurity, it is important to understand the poverty rate and food insecurity levels here in our community. We also need to understand what the barriers are to improving household and community food security locally, so we know what kinds of evidence-based initiatives will help to remove some of those barriers.

Comparing poverty rates in Williams Lake to the national and provincial averages (based on the Market Basket Measure):



TARGET POPULATIONS

Target populations for the Community Food Hub align with the demographics worst hit by high poverty rates: these are children 0-19, women (particularly single mothers), and Indigenous populations. Poverty rates within these demographics in Williams Lake are also higher than the provincial and national averages:



The recently released Williams Lake Community Well-Being and Safety Plan (which can be found on the [City of Williams Lake's website](#)) includes a detailed review of the city's crime statistics, and associated risk factors. Many of these same risk factors are interwoven with rates of food insecurity as part of the complexity of poverty. Some of those risk factor statistics for our community are as follows:

- 43 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, of which 68% identify as Indigenous
- 10.5% unemployment rate, compared to 6% provincially
- 1 in 5 households struggle with poverty
- 26% of children under the age of 6 live in poverty compared to 20% at the provincial level
- 21% of children experience food insecurity
- 10% of students have skipped meals once a month due to lack of money for food
- 15% of families are lone parent families, of which 75% are female-led

The Social Planning Council's Thrive Report highlights three priority actions in reducing food insecurity:

- Address upstream causes of food security
- Ensure all children and youth have access to healthy food in school
- Ensure all food in the community is utilized for the benefit of the community

And what about community food insecurity? The terms food security and food access are often interchangeable. As the City of Vancouver's Food Strategy points out, however, the latter can not only affirm the principles commonly associated with household food security, but also mitigate them amongst a wider range of strategies that will contribute to a more food-resilient community as a whole. These strategies would include "community capacity-building and skill building opportunities, educational programs, community celebrations, and awareness-raising on food system issues. In this way, food access becomes a priority for all citizens, not only the most vulnerable."

The drivers of community food insecurity are as complex as household food insecurity, but far less researched to date. They encompass all the same drivers as individual food insecurity: impoverished, marginalized communities have less access to nutritious, culturally-appropriate food due to financial barriers. But drivers of community food insecurity also include:

- Disappearing farmland and farm families
- Lack of market diversity and infrastructure for local food production to thrive
- Increasing land costs that impede 1st generation farmers from entering the industry
- Few direct relationships and lack of education between consumers and food producers
- Environmental degradation due to conventional agricultural production
- Weak government support or action for land use policies that encourage local food production

While there are many issues preventing community food security on the production side, such as limited market share, consumer education, and the difficulty new farmers face accessing land and infrastructure, the main driver before even leaving the gate is effective agricultural policy to support new farmers. The numbers on new and exiting farmers make it clear that existing barriers are too many for new farmers to consider entering the market:



THE TOTAL NUMBER OF FARMS LOST IN CANADA SINCE 1991 (FROM 2016 CENSUS DATA)

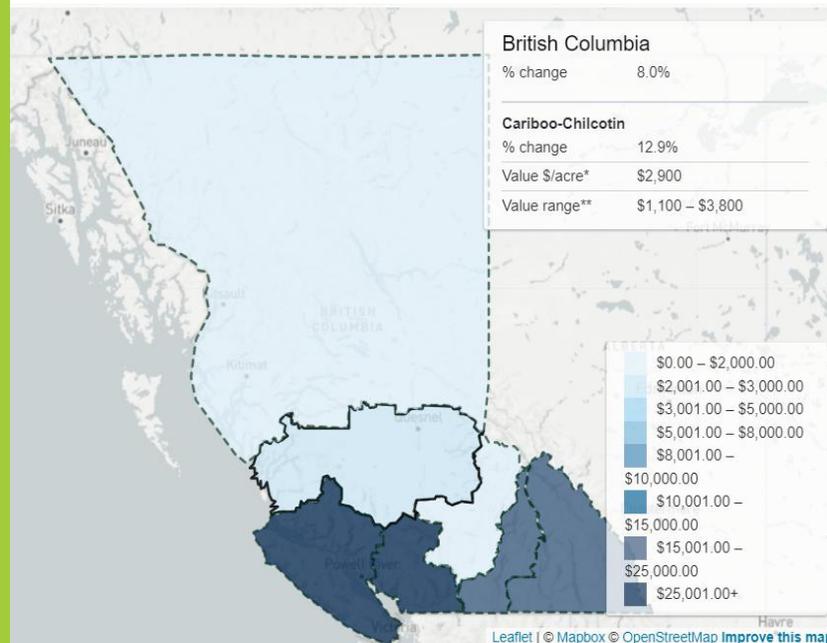


NUMBER OF FARMERS THAT ARE OVER 55 AND LOOKING TO PASS ON THEIR FARMS



NUMBER OF THOSE AGING FARMERS WHO DO NOT HAVE A SUCCESSOR OR SUCCESSION PLAN FOR THEIR FARMS

With increasing interest from young people to enter farming, especially regenerative farming, and skyrocketing demand for locally grown and produced products – especially during the pandemic and natural disasters – the barriers are also increasing, namely input costs and rising land costs. In 2020, BC had the highest increase in agricultural land values in the country.



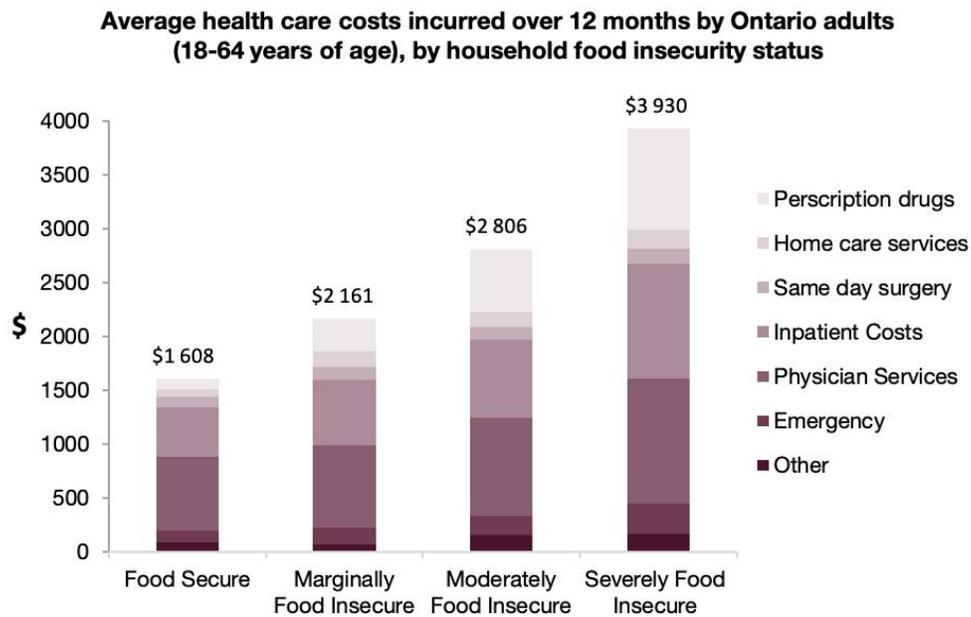
A growing local food system needs a balanced combination of policies to support business and market development, and reduce barriers to entry for new farmers.

“The present moment offers a great opportunity for the government to harness this excitement to lift the barriers new farmers face and strengthen the future of Canadian agriculture”. *Food Secure Canada*

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO BE FOOD SECURE

Basic human and cultural rights to healthy, sufficient quantities of food aside, there are community-wide impacts of food insecurity for which awareness needs to be raised.

Household food insecurity has a huge impact on community health and the health care system:



Data Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) 2005, 2007-08, 2009-10

These findings imply that addressing food insecurity could offset considerable public expenditures on health care in Canada and improve overall health. A more food secure household or individual will see improved health outcomes, such as lower rates of obesity and diabetes, depression, and heart conditions (all of which increase with food insecurity).

Some of the other indicators of increased food security, and long-term benefits to communities, can be gleaned from a BC Centre for Disease Control 2019 literature review:

- Subsidized food sources and price incentives have shown to increase fruit and vegetable intake, and decrease chronic disease risk
- New mothers who are food secure are more likely to breastfeed their newborns exclusively, up to 4 months of age
- For children, evidence supports a link between food security and higher likelihood of meeting academic expectations
- In cases where diverse food system infrastructure exists in areas prone to natural disasters, resilience is increased
- Local/regional agricultural diversity (on the production side) is a central element in creating more resilient food systems

Moving Forward

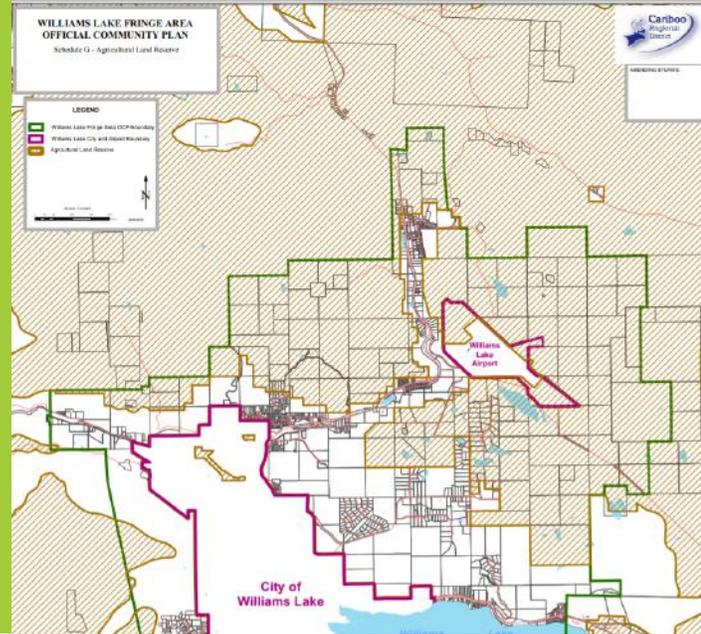
While the Community Food Hub may not be able to increase household income directly, it can facilitate programs that reduce a household budget's food expenses, increase access to healthy foods, especially for those most vulnerable, support local food producers and emergency food providers, and advocate for better wages and social assistance programs. The following environmental scan, gap analysis, and operational recommendations will aim to narrow down the most relevant ways in which our community can accomplish these goals.

"When planning projects intended to increase community access to food, local governments need to consider all other systems impacting health and access to food, including poverty reduction, affordable and appropriate housing, and systemic and structural racism."

PlanH - BC Healthy Communities Society

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The purpose of this section is to paint a picture of the level of food insecurity in the Williams Lake area, based on various indicators.



As part of the Community Food Hub's environmental scan, we used the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Framework for Action to guide some of our enquiries into our current state of food security. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) was created in 2014 by Milan's then mayor and presented at Milan EXPO 2015, where it was signed by over 100 cities internationally. Here is their definition of the Pact:

"The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact is an international agreement of Mayors. It is more than a declaration, it is a concrete working tool for cities. It is composed by a preamble and a Framework for Action listing 37 recommended actions, clustered in 6 categories. For each recommended action there are specific indicators to monitor progresses in implementing the Pact."

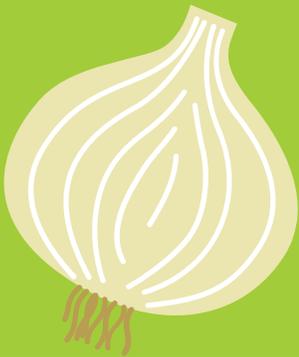
This framework is not just for big cities that we have little in common with. The fact is urban centres account for 50% of the world's population, and in the Central Cariboo, it's no different (urban populations account for approximately 55% of the total population in the Cariboo Regional District). There are a number of small to medium-sized cities who have either signed onto the Pact, or use the framework and monitoring plan to develop their own locally relevant food security projects. It is especially useful for smaller communities that may not have the capacity to develop their own detailed monitoring plans.

First, we have looked at the framework's 6 categories of recommended actions and narrowed down the priority action indicators for which primary and secondary community research to date is most readily available. This report does not have the capacity to investigate all 37 actions and associated indicators, but the 6 categories and the chosen indicators listed below give us a moderate snapshot of our community's investment in food security.

1.) GOVERNANCE

a.) Presence of an active municipal, interdepartmental government body for advisory and decision making of food policies and programmes (e.g. interdepartmental food working group, food policy office, food team)

- The CRD has recently expanded its Agricultural Development Advisory Committee to include both the Central and South Cariboo regions, and develop an Agricultural Area Plan
 - One of the City of Williams Lake's Economic Development Strategy Report's (2018) priority areas is agricultural diversification and one action item is development of a "Williams Lake Agricultural Steering Committee" (Sec. 3.2.6)
- b.) Presence of an active multi-stakeholder food policy and planning structure (e.g. food policy councils; food partnerships; food coalitions)
- The Williams Lake Food Policy Council is an independent, civil society organization that aims to promote and support local food production, and develop a strategic plan for local food security
- c.) Presence of a municipal urban food policy or strategy and/or action plans
- The City of Williams Lake's Integrated Community Sustainability Planning Framework (2010) includes local food and agriculture goals and objectives for 2035 targets
 - The Cariboo Regional District Williams Lake Fringe area Official Community Plan (OCP) includes a section on Agriculture and Resources with goals and objectives to meet needs of both industries
 - No comprehensive community food strategy to achieve these goals, or to reflect changing conditions of food insecurity
- d.) Existence of a food supply emergency/food resilience management plan for the municipality (in response to disasters; vulnerabilities in food production, transport, access; socio economic shocks, etc.) based on a vulnerability assessment
- No comprehensive community food strategy that addresses food supply or resilience in emergency scenarios



SUSTAINABLE DIETS AND NUTRITION

- a.) Costs of a nutritious food basket at city/community level
- The Community Food Hub coordinator used the food costing spreadsheet from the National Nutritious Food Basket (NNFB) guidelines to calculate and average the monthly cost of a healthy diet for a family of 4 in Williams Lake. The result was **\$1113.72/month** (see Appendix A for tables). The latest calculation from the BC Centre for Disease Control for which data is available (2017) for our health region is \$1019.00/month, a difference of \$94.72/month.
- b.) Number of city-led or supported activities to promote sustainable diets
- Fee for service agreement with the Williams Lake Food Policy Council to support sustainable food production and dietary health
 - Service agreement between City of Williams Lake and the Williams Lake Food Policy Council to make land available for a community garden (Carson Drive/5th Ave)
 - City supported the Cariboo Growers Cooperative through an affordable lease rate in city-owned storefront until 2018
 - City supports the Williams Lake Farmers' Market through a rental agreement for its downtown city-owned parking lot location, as well as various operational supports
 - Policies 18 through 26 in the City of Williams Lake Official Community Plan - Local Food and Agriculture support improving access to foods that "are affordable, healthy, local, and secure".

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY

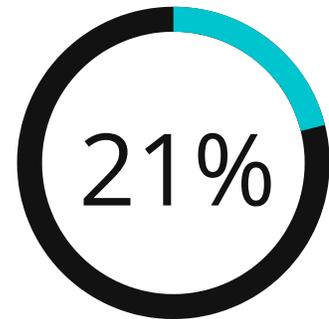


A.) % OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY FOOD AND/OR SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES

There are at least 10 community organizations with hamper, meal, food shelf, or food education programs for those in need. We collated annual data from each of the food access organizations in our community to determine a rate of food insecurity, inferring that the number of individuals/hampers served as a percentage of the total population could serve as a measure of household food insecurity (see Appendix B for data):

TOTAL individuals accessing emergency food services in 2020 from ALL participating organizations: 2,520 (21% of the Williams Lake population)

(This calculation is an average across the year, and does not take into account overlap between services, ie: clients accessing multiple services)



Additionally, we sourced annual data from the Cariboo District Farmers' Market Association on the provincial Nutrition Coupon program run through the BC Association of Farmers' Markets. The coupon program is supported by the Province of British Columbia and the Provincial Health Services Authority, and it is administered through community organizations and BCAFm member markets (see Appendix C for data):

TOTAL number of coupons redeemed, and dollar value going to local producers, through our market has increased by 240% in the 3 years the Williams Lake Farmers' Market has been running the program.



"Only about one in every four or five food insecure households may access and receive some food from food banks, soup kitchens or other food-based relief programs" so needs based on above figures are likely higher, and/or resources are not reaching those who are moderately or marginally food insecure, or face other barriers that prevent them from accessing current resources.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY



B.) % OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH (UNDER 18 YEARS) BENEFITTING FROM SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMMES

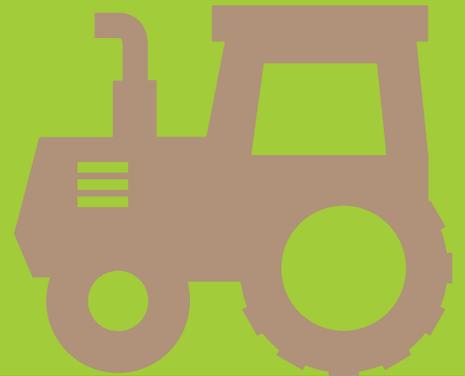
We do not have data for how many students access or benefit from school food programs, however below is a list of all area schools (elementary to high school) that have free breakfast and/or lunch programs at their locations, as well as school gardens:

SCHOOL	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	SCHOOL GARDEN
Catalane	YES	NO	YES
150 school	NO	NO	YES
Lac la Hache	YES	YES (1 day/week)	YES
Nesika	YES	NO	YES
Marie sharpe	YES	NO	YES
WL secondary	YES	NO	YES
Columnneetza	YES	NO	YES (GH)
Mountview elementary	NO	Salad bar program (monthly fees) 2x/week	NO
Chilcotin Rd elementary	NO	NO	NO
Big Lake elementary	NO	NO. Does have access to hall across street	NO
Horsefly elementary	NO	Farm to School lunch/1x week + BC fruit+ veg	NO
Skyline		YES + BC fruit+veg	NO

C.) NUMBER OF COMMUNITY-BASED FOOD ASSETS IN THE CITY

- Williams Lake Community Garden
- Williams Lake Farmers' Market 2 days/week (May - October)
- Annual Seedy Saturday event
- 2-3 seasonal greenhouse operations within City limits (May-July)
- School gardens x7
- The Potato House Society community composting and garden
- Cariboo Chilcotin Conservation Society's Waste Wise gleaning project and Food Not wasted project
- Local wisdom: Valuable and extensive Indigenous knowledge base of traditional foods, climate and soil types. Tradition of foraging, growing, preserving, farming, and ranching in the area.
- Some local food sold primarily at 2 small retailers within City limits
- Applied Sustainable Ranching program offered exclusively at the Williams Lake Thompson Rivers University campus

FOOD PRODUCTION



A) NUMBER OF CITY RESIDENTS WITHIN THE MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY WITH ACCESS TO AN (URBAN) AGRICULTURE GARDEN

- The Williams Lake Food Policy Council's community garden has 67 beds for use by community members (for a small annual donation) as well as 5 herb beds and a children's garden
- The Potato House project has 4-5 community garden beds

B) NUMBER OF MUNICIPAL FOOD PROCESSING AND DISTRIBUTION INFRASTRUCTURES AVAILABLE TO FOOD PRODUCERS IN THE MUNICIPAL AREA

- None in the Williams Lake area. There is a new food processing facility recently developed in Quesnel (Sprout Kitchen) serving the Cariboo region

C) PROPORTION OF LOCAL/REGIONAL FOOD PRODUCERS THAT SELL THEIR PRODUCTS TO PUBLIC MARKETS IN THE CITY

- From the 2016 agricultural census, there were 1411 reporting farms within the Cariboo regional district, and of these farms, approximately 86 sell direct to customers through either farmers markets or CSA programs, which would be the only sales categories listed that are available to urban customers.
- We have 2-3 small retailers, including the seasonal Williams Lake farmers' market, as available urban markets for some local producers.
- Our community operated a local food cooperative (Cariboo Growers Coop) from 2010 to 2018 that saw solid demand through strong gross revenue (more than \$100,000/year) but struggled to cover costs, resulting in its closure.

FOOD SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION



A) NUMBER OF FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE OUTLETS PER 1000 INHABITANTS (MARKETS AND SHOPS) SUPPORTED BY THE MUNICIPALITY.

- Williams Lake Farmers' Market from May to October with a maximum of 45 vendor spaces (during COVID regulations)
- Total number of individual vendors (members) in 2021: **92**
 - Agricultural - primary producers: 26
 - Other Food - baking, canning, ready-to-eat etc.: 24
 - Artisan/Craft/Service: 42

(these numbers are membership totals categorized by vendor type, and do not reflect the number of each that attends every market, which varies throughout the season. It also includes vendors that attend the market from outside the region.)

Vendor breakdown by type:

- Farmers: 28%
- Food Makers: 26%
- Other: 46%

B) PRESENCE OF A DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE AND EFFICIENCY OF LOCAL FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS LOGISTICS

- Currently, no plan exists to strengthen resilience and efficiency of local food supply chains logistics.

FOOD SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION



C) PROPORTION OF FOOD PROCUREMENT EXPENDITURE BY PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS ON FOOD FROM SUSTAINABLE, ETHICAL SOURCES AND SHORTER (LOCAL/REGIONAL) SUPPLY CHAINS

- Some local procurement efforts made as part of Horsefly Elementary's Farm 2 School lunch program
- Some locally-produced and/or harvested foods going to community lunches in regional First Nation communities, such as Esdilaigh
- No local food procurement from hospitals, seniors homes, or government facilities that we are aware of

D) INVOLVEMENT/INTEREST FROM INSTITUTIONS, GOVERNMENTS, AND HEALTH REGIONS IN LOCAL FOOD SUPPLY AND ADVOCACY

- Our regional health authority - Interior Health (IH) - has a number of initiatives and resources aimed at improving local food security and reducing food insecurity as a public health issue. One program, the Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI), is a "health promotion initiative that aims to increase community food security for all British Columbians". In our region, CFAI funding is delivered through the Healthy Eating and Food Security program and is supported by the Public Health Dietitian team.
- Local First Nations such as Ulkatcho and Yunesit'in have secured funding for community food projects.
- Interior Health supports community-level efforts to increase food security, and maintains an internal contact for food security-related partnerships or resources (foodsecurity@interiorhealth.ca)
- Our local governments have expressed continued interest in advancing the local food system, but say they require initiative and support from community organizations and resources.

FOOD WASTE



A) PRESENCE OF POLICIES OR REGULATIONS THAT ADDRESS FOOD WASTE PREVENTION, RECOVERY AND REDISTRIBUTION

- 2 local grocers have confirmed food recovery programs and/or policies in place:
 - Save On Foods (Overwaitea Food Group) has partnered with our local Salvation Army food bank and Loop Resources to divert and donate food waste, as well as various local farms to recover the remainder.
 - Wholesale Club in Williams Lake (Loblaws) has an extensive Corporate Social Responsibility policy for all its stores. Our local Wholesale Club donates periodically to the Salvation Army food bank.

EXISTING FOOD WASTE PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, AND PARTNERSHIPS

- FreshCo Williams Lake is in the process of partnering with Loop Resources and donates to emergency food programs in the interim.
- Walmart Williams Lake donates meat and other food write-offs to Salvation Army food bank.
- Our local food bank, the Salvation Army, does a fantastic job recovering as much food waste from local grocers as possible, but sometimes they struggle to have the capacity to either hold an influx of food donations, or distribute them. They currently have sufficient capacity to process and use any perishable donations they receive in their kitchen facility, but they also do not receive many donations of perishable foods, which are typically the more nutritious fruits and vegetables.
- At least 2 grocers, as well as the Salvation Army, have relationships with local farmers to pick up perishable food waste.
- Our local Potato House Society is the only composting facility in the municipality. Their volunteers have put in countless hours turning and creating compost dropped off at their downtown location from City residents
- The Cariboo Chilcotin Conservation Society delivers food waste education to School District 27 and 28 students year round, as well as the community when and where possible. They aim to coordinate and host at least one food gleaning event each year, but it is limited by which farms - if any - have any produce to glean. The produce is then donated to a local organization, and/or stored in a volunteer root cellar for donations throughout the winter of storage crops like potatoes and carrots.

EXISTING GOALS & OBJECTIVES FOR FOOD SECURITY

We also reviewed the City of Williams Lake's own indicators for household and community food security, as well as the Regional District's. The City of Williams Lake's most recent version of the Official Community Plan and their Integrated Community Sustainability Planning Framework (ICSP) includes results from extensive community research they conducted previous to publishing the report (2010) on the state of our local food economy, our social well-being, and priority areas of improvement.

One of the ICSP's goals is a local living wage and equal access to nutritious food, with anti-poverty and living wage campaigns to be launched within 5 years of the report's publication.

City of Williams Lake Official Community Plan - Social Well-Being Policies most relevant to relieving household food insecurity:

- SWB.27 Continue to support the development of a community "living wage" campaign.
- SWB.23 Continue to support access to affordable recreation programs for children and their families that promote active living and healthy eating.

The City's ICSP and OCP also have established goals and objectives, and 31 specific local food and agriculture policies around improving our local food system. Their indicators of success in meeting their local food and agricultural goals are:

- 1.) All local stores, institutions, and restaurants purchase and serve food produced by local farms
- 2.) Everyone in the Williams Lake community has dignified access to healthy, nourishing, locally produced food
- 3.) Our local food system provides opportunities for community interaction
- 4.) Local ecological and indigenous knowledge is preserved and integrated into our overall food production, marketing, and purchasing practices for Williams Lake, including the integrity of plants and seeds
- 5.) All farms in the region conform to the highest international standards for sustainable farming
- 6.) Local farms are economically successful with sales in the local market

Majority of the issues analysis outlined in the ICSP are still relevant today:

Non-local food dependency: There is a high dependence on imported food; many local ranchers cannot sell their beef locally and have to export it, due to a lack of local processing facilities for livestock.

Development pressure: There is encroachment of development onto agriculturally productive land and traditional First Nations hunting, fishing and foraging grounds. There are no incentives for urban food production.

Lack of alignment to address food system: Lack of coordinated movement around local food production. There is a lack of fully comprehensive community knowledge regarding most agriculturally productive or potentially productive lands and there is no capital budget allocated to local food infrastructure within City limits.

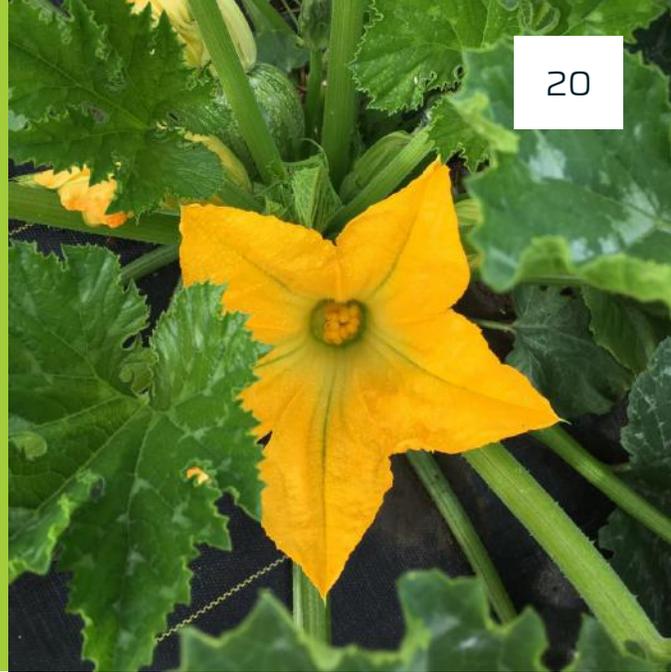
Regulations: Local, provincial and federal regulations and zoning bylaws provide additional challenges for the growing, processing and marketing of local foods.

However, our community assets have changed a great deal since these policy directives took place, and some of the priority areas require updating.

The Cariboo Regional District's Williams Lake and Fringe Area OCP relates more to land use policy: it supports the overall objectives of the Agricultural Land Commission Act and discourages non-agricultural uses on agricultural and ALR lands, but more exploration into encouraging agricultural development in the area through land use policies could be valuable.

GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

In this section, we have summarized the gaps that came out of our Environmental Scan, as well as related opportunities and supporting evidence.



SUMMARY OF GAPS:

1. Actionable items and advocacy for basic income policies and meeting the municipality's local food and agriculture goals
2. A municipal interdepartmental government body or staff member to work with regional district and community stakeholders on local food system building
3. No emergency or food resilience management plan
4. Limited capacity amongst grassroots food providers to coordinate and share resources
5. Limited capacity to meet and adapt to increasing need for food donations to marginally or moderately food-insecure residents who may not use traditional resources (ie: food banks, hamper programs, etc)
6. Limited infrastructure in place to process perishable food donations and store for later use by network of emergency food providers
7. Potential for more school lunch programs with improved/increased kitchen infrastructure, food sourcing, and partnerships
8. Little operational ability to recover or source locally produced food, with benefits going to local farmers and those in need
9. No infrastructure in place to support and advance local food production (storage, processing, distribution, sales, etc)
10. Challenging real estate, labour markets, and legislation to support farmers scaling their businesses, or attracting new farmers to the area

GOVERNANCE & POLICY

With the need for upstream solutions to be rooted in income equality and adequate social programs in order to reduce household food insecurity, current municipal social well-being policy that advocates for and actively supports basic incomes and improved access to social supports will inherently improve access to healthy, nutritious food for lower-income residents.

However, a common misalignment in government policy as it relates to food insecurity is the role of local food in providing equitable access to nutritious food to lower-income residents. While there are certainly opportunities to do this that can benefit both local producers, as well as those seeking emergency food access that often cannot provide nutritious, raw foods (as we will point out in the last section of this report), policy should not turn to local food production as a solution to household food insecurity. References in our Local Food and Agriculture policies should reflect this, and focus on the policies that support and advocate for both income equality and a strong local food economy as upstream solutions to food insecurity.

As for community food insecurity, the Environmental Scan highlights a bigger gap in local food system governance and planning. The Cariboo Regional District's newly-expanded Agricultural Development Advisory Committee (ADAC) is a big step in the right direction. The expanded committee - which will include members from both the Central and South Cariboo, where previously it was only a North Cariboo membership - will advise on matters not only relating to land-use policy as it relates to agricultural production, but also to "further economic development and build critical mass within the industry" of local agriculture.

Our local food system policies and performance, based on our review of the indicators and strategies laid out in the City's Official Community Plan, require updating and an action plan. Our local food system's Current Reality has changed a great deal since these policies were drafted and last reviewed, particularly with regards to scale of local production, market availability of local products, and an up-to-date community food policy (the Williams Lake Agricultural Steering Committee as part of the City's Economic Development Strategy was not able to move forward, for example, in 2018). While the City of Williams Lake's Integrated Community Sustainability Planning Framework (2010) includes many admirable local food and agriculture goals and objectives that are still relevant today, and the Williams Lake Food Policy Council has developed strategies around some of these goals, there is a lack of capacity within each organization to take action, and no comprehensive, community-wide food system strategy. In addition, current policy references that we know do not contribute to alleviating food insecurity - such as community garden expansion - should also be revised.

PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

The qualitative data we compiled from interviews with organizations that run food access programs highlighted the following gaps in program delivery:

- 1.) While many organizations share resources and donations, most experience inconsistent volume and frequency of donations, particularly during COVID and environmental emergencies, and do not have a system in place for collecting and distributing donations to all organizations.
- 2.) For a number of organizations, food drives have decreased and most do not have official relationships with food retailers for sourcing donations or bulk purchases
- 3.) Most organizations lack storage capacity, such as cooling, shelf space, and hamper coordination
- 4.) Our one registered food bank has the capacity to process fresh fruits and vegetables for their own programs (using their own kitchen and storage facilities), but they do not have the capacity to process, distribute, or store excess perishable donations they may receive, which are often the healthier food groups.
- 5.) Only 1 organization has a delivery vehicle and it cannot meet the increasing demand for client deliveries, especially during COVID when some are hesitant to visit food banks. This gap also makes it difficult for organizations to receive donations when they have to rely on staff or volunteers.
- 6.) At least 3 organizations indicated confidence in adequate funding for existing or new food delivery programming, but struggle with sufficient staff, volunteer, or infrastructural resources to deliver them
- 7.) There is an overall need for more support to coordinate donations and/or deliveries between organizations

As referenced in the Environmental Scan, statistically food banks often only serve about 25% of those who are experiencing food insecurity. BC's Poverty Reduction Strategy highlighted feedback from lived experience participants who are food insecure: they pointed out various difficulties that would prevent them from accessing food bank services, such as limited availability of fresh and nutritious food, limited hours, long lines, safety concerns, and transportation barriers. They also expressed the shame and guilt they experience when considering food bank use. You then add concerns around COVID exposure, and the increase in those on the brink of food insecurity due to financial pressures from the pandemic, and you find that we need to come up with creative ways to reach these at-risk community members.

COVID 19 has had a big impact on food banks, namely a significant drop in volunteers, stock for hampers and meals, financing, and increased vulnerability for their clients. Recent natural disasters in the province, and subsequent food shortages at local grocers, have also all but cut them off from one of their main sources of food for clients. Until household food insecurity rates in our community go down, developing a community food resiliency plan that makes space for emergency food providers is the best solution in the interim.





From the chart in the Environmental Scan, we can see that most of our area schools have a breakfast program, but very few lunch programs. There are a number of school districts in the province that are delivering lunch programs to students in need through a variety of funders, and our school district's capacity to offer more food programs to students could be increased with more kitchen facilities and staff/volunteers through community partnerships and combined funding applications.

From our food costing exercise, there is an indication that the cost of a healthy diet for a family of four in the Williams Lake area is higher than the regional average, with more food price increases projected for 2022 (see Community Support). The gap here is getting healthy foods into the hands of those who cannot currently afford it. This can come in the form of either subsidized and dignified food costs such as grocery cards, or healthy, shelf-stable food donations through community partners.

Food waste from local grocers is another gap in emergency food access that could be filled through Community Food Hub objectives. Our local food bank currently recovers as much as possible from all four local grocers, and distributes extras to other organizations, but there may be opportunities to recover fresh, raw foods especially, to be processed and stored for donation. Restaurants are another option for food recovery, especially for organizations whose clients require ready to eat foods. Some organizations receive donations periodically from KFC, but that is all we are aware of.

LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

From our research, it doesn't take long to observe some big gaps in local food production and they are the same gaps that every small to medium-size community faces. The Cariboo is unique in that it is a significant agricultural land base, but relatively few local products are accessible. The Cariboo region contains the most ALR land of any region in the province (30% of all ALR land total is in the Cariboo). Majority of the farm receipts in the region come from cattle ranching and hay production, but about 95% of BC's cattle are exported to Alberta for processing. We then have 98 fruit and vegetable producers reporting within the CRD as of the 2016 census, but very few of them do direct sales in Williams Lake. Some of the main reasons area producers struggle to access customers are regulations and lack of established local food infrastructure and systems.

Meat Sector Challenges

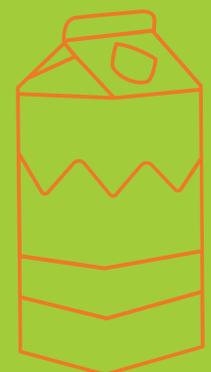
Some of the biggest hurdles in bridging the gaps between customers and producers is for meat production. The Small-scale Meat Producers Association of BC (SSMPA) conducted a province-wide survey of small-scale meat producers in 2021, to answer some critical questions about key barriers to local meat production and which of those are highest priority. They will be releasing an analysis of the results, along with recommendations, sometime in the near future. These recommendations should be reviewed for meat producers supports moving forward.

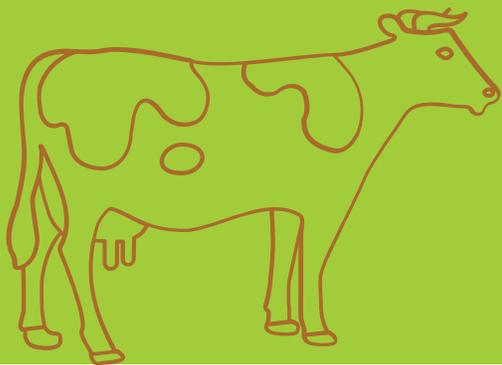
What we do know, however, is that some of the top issues meat producers face are around a lack of capacity at local abattoirs and butchers, or access to these facilities in rural areas. The province recently released revised licensing requirements for small-scale meat producers (October 1, 2021). Two new licenses - Farmgate and Farmgate Plus - allow producers to slaughter up to 25 animals (their own or those of other producers) on-site and sell either direct or retail, anywhere in BC. These licenses replace 2 previous meat licenses D and E, which were more restrictive. They were only available in 13 of the province's 28 regional districts and were not as flexible as the new licenses. This is a step in the right direction, but as SSMPA vice-president Tristan Banwell states, there is more work to be done. "We need improvements to the Meat Inspection Regulation that support farmers throughout the province in their efforts to supply local markets with locally-raised meat."

Beyond Meat: Markets

While vegetable producers have far fewer regulatory barriers than meat producers, they hit a wall when it comes to markets through which they can access customers. This is a huge problem for local food systems across the board that we cannot solve through the Community Food Hub alone, but we can improve the situation by creating markets for local products that will attract more producers and customers to the local food system, and build demand. Many of the suggestions in the last section of this report are also built to be beneficial for emergency food access, such as storage and distribution capacity.

Currently, the Williams Lake area has only 1 market dedicated to local food sales: the Williams Lake Farmers' Market. While we are very lucky to have such an amazing market 2 days per week, for a relatively small town (up to 45 vendors), it is seasonal, limited hours, and in the elements. From the Environmental Scan, we can see that our farmers' market had 26 agricultural producers in its membership in 2021, but there are few market opportunities for those producers outside of the farmers' market. In addition, farmers' markets can be a costly way to do business when you run the numbers, so diversifying markets for local food and increasing access and education for consumers is a gap in our community.





Other infrastructural gaps that would help local producers scale up their businesses would be commercial kitchen access, tool/equipment share programs, and the age-old problem of too few abattoirs. Some of this infrastructure could also be utilized to close some of the gaps in emergency food access, such as processing and storage capacity.

The Williams Lake Food Policy Council (2006) secured funding to hire a consultant (Jillian Merrick) in 2016 to draft a Strategic Growth Plan for Williams Lake area fruit and vegetable producers. The final report (aptly titled “Branching Out”) provided a snapshot of area producers: half are new farmers (5 years or less experience) and half are experienced and/or exiting (20 years plus experience). Majority of farms produce 1 full-time job (the farmer) and use 3 acres of land or less. Most sold via farm gate, small retail, or farmers’ markets. This is very typical of today’s small-scale vegetable producers, who are growing in numbers but have difficulty making a dent in consumer purchasing habits when working on their own. The report then highlighted common barriers to growth for local producers, and strategic priorities around minimizing those barriers, namely marketing and sales, and labour.

While this report gleaned its community profile from fruit and vegetable producers, the strategic priorities and next steps apply to all small farm businesses in the area looking to grow. Even if, for example, the Community Food Hub project is able to improve market access for local producers, they will still need marketing and sales support, and labour opportunities. These are useful strategies in the report that should still be implemented, as well as 4 remaining priority areas for strategic development. It is recommended that the Community Food Hub implement some of the strategies as part of its 1-5 year plan, and continue developing these priority areas for growth.

Lastly, increased effort could be made in re-examining our regional land use policies for opportunities to incentivize local food production. There could be other ways to attract new producers to the area through progressive land use policies and ownership models, such as long-term lease agreements or incubator farms.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

With everything going on in the world today, it’s tough to know where to start, but one thing is for sure: in times of disaster and uncertainty, it’s those already most vulnerable who suffer the most. The opportunity that also presents itself, however, is that attitudes are shifting. They are shifting towards a desire for a more caring and just society, for equitable access to basic needs, and systems that are more resilient and less dependent, particularly around our food. Majority of Canadians (65%) support seriously tackling social issues like poverty, inequality, and climate change even if they’re expensive and during a pandemic. Close to 80% support piloting a basic income policy (Gandalf Study).

As for local food, support couldn't be greater. We have seen our store shelves go bare twice now in the last 2 years, and this has increased demand for a more stable, resilient food supply. Before COVID and natural disasters, however, the support for local food had already been increasing every year. According to the BC domestic consumption study (2018), most of our local consumers (53%) are price-sensitive on-the-go eaters, the remaining 47% are health and socially-conscious eaters, which is a big segment of the population. And while competitive prices are the top reason consumers may choose an imported product over a local product, clear product labeling and shelf location (showing that it is a BC or local product) are very close behind. Consumers *want* to buy local products, and are often willing to pay more for them, they just don't know where to find them. This may shift even further, with the release of Agri-food and Analytics Lab's most recent Canada Food Price Report (2022). They are predicting an increase in price on food in Canada yet again. With an average of 5%-7%, it is "the highest predicted increase in food prices since the inception of the report twelve years ago". This report has a history of being very accurate.

In 2015, a small group of Geography students conducted a consumer survey of Williams Lake residents' produce shopping habits, to determine demand for local food (see infographic in Appendix C) 94 residents were surveyed at various locations: supermarkets, the farmers' market, parks, and residential neighbourhoods. Somewhat surprisingly, only 29% found local food products to be too expensive, but 80% considered it more healthy. And while 42% considered price to be their top concern when purchasing, 58% were also concerned about whether it is organic or local. In short, the demand for local and organic food is very clear in the market research and has been for some time. What is often reported as a challenge for consumers is identifying or finding local products in their local grocers. There are a number of funded marketing campaigns through the Province of BC that can assist in marketing local products to customers (see list of Potential Grant opportunities).

COVID & CLIMATE CHANGE

A research review out of McMaster University examined the prevalence of household food insecurity (HFI) in North America as a result of COVID-19 (June, 2021) and the report finds that prevalence of HFI has increased during the pandemic, especially among low-income households, and those with children. They observed that food insecurity rates in the general population changed by up to 4.1%, but for low-income households, prevalence increased by 10%-47% (depending on the severity of food insecurity).





empty store shelves at Save On Foods Williams Lake, days after flooding events in the lower mainland cut off supplies, and prompted panic buying (photo by Barb Jones)

Three Canadian studies observed that 4.8% of fathers and 8.5% of mothers in middle- to high-income samples reported prevalence of food insecurity.. One thing we can surmise with these findings is that impacts of the pandemic on food security are seeping into population groups that may have never before experienced food insecurity, and impacting those on the cusp (low-income earners) more acutely and more suddenly. This presents a new challenge for those working in food security, one of which is reaching these newly or more acutely food-insecure community members: traditional methods of reducing food insecurity like food banks or hampers, may not be effective for these groups.

Another survey author Sylvain Charlebois and his team at the Dalhousie lab presents a potential opportunity for increased local food production and sales, however. They released survey results in May, 2021 that examined evolving post pandemic shopping habits amongst over 10,000 respondents. They indicated that almost a quarter of shoppers plan to shop online for their groceries, and their commitment to independent grocers and local food is very strong: almost 61% of Canadians want to spend about 19% of their food budget with independent businesses and 75% want to see more local products on shelves.

Last, but certainly not least, are the impacts of climate change on food insecurity. At the time of writing this report, the most productive agricultural land in the province - and the country's largest shipping port - are virtually cut off from the rest of the province due to catastrophic flooding in the lower mainland and areas south of Cache Creek. While not entirely due to climate change, the impact on food availability was felt immediately. The grocery store shelves in Williams Lake were half empty within 2 days. This impacted those most vulnerable in the worst way: not only were the shelves empty, it would take weeks before any appreciable food "waste" could even be recovered for donation, as panic buying continued while shipments trickled in. Even with food banks attempting to buy food for their clients, there wasn't sufficient quantity or quality left. In addition to this challenge, for people on fixed incomes (social assistance, pensions) payment dates often don't align with food availability when there is a shortage, and they can't afford to 'bulk buy' when food IS available

It has been a wakeup call for so many working in sustainable food systems advocacy that we need to get our butts in gear and add the same diversity to our food system that you do to a sustainable farm: balanced diversity means fewer negative impacts suffered from external shocks. This means supporting local production to scale their businesses efficiently so that they can support their communities, and ensuring systems are in place to protect those most at risk. We do not currently have an emergency/food resilience management plan for the municipality (in response to disasters; vulnerabilities in food production, transport, access; socio economic shocks, etc.) based on a vulnerability assessment. This would be a useful addition to a Community Food Strategy, or the Community Food Hub's operational and strategic plans.

INDIGENOUS FOOD SECURITY

We are so fortunate to live in a part of the world that is not only beautiful by nature, but by the hands who have taken care of this land for millennia. We live more closely with our Indigenous neighbours than many other communities in this province, and this should be considered an opportunity: for learning, for growth, and for healing.

When it comes to healthy food and the close relationship it provides to this land, however, our Indigenous neighbours face many challenges that all stem from a broken colonial food system, and income inequality.

As we have seen, Indigenous peoples are grossly over-represented in our national poverty rates: 48% of Indigenous households have difficulty just putting food on the table in Canada. With many Indigenous communities situated in very rural areas - particularly in the Cariboo region - healthy foods often cost far more than they do in urban areas, if they are available at all due to their distance. This has led to a critical food-related health crisis amongst Indigenous populations: 85% of all Indigenous adults are obese or overweight, and one fifth have type 2 diabetes (First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study 2019).

The Central Cariboo Community Food Hub aims to not only support our Indigenous neighbours' right to traditional and healthy foods in any way we can, but we also aim to heal relationships in our community through food. Sharing a meal is a time-old tradition of building and maintaining bonds, and those bonds need to be strengthened in our community. With our Indigenous neighbours leading the way, bringing community members together through regular and culturally-appropriate meals that allow us to learn and build respect, would have positive and lasting impacts on our relationships moving forward.



*building bonds through food - ?Esdilagh
community garden (photo: Brianna van
de Wijngaard)*

CENTRAL CARIBOO COMMUNITY FOOD HUB

PROJECT ASSESSMENT & COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION

FEBRUARY 9 2022

On February 9th, 2022, the project team hosted a community input session to glean feedback on the Project Assessment. Through 2 breakout sessions, we had community members and stakeholders record their feedback on a Google JamBoard in 6 topic areas:

1. What's missing from this picture so far? What are we not seeing?
2. What do you see as the top 3 food security challenges our community is facing?
3. What excites you about the project vision?
4. What challenges or barriers do you see in Project Vision?
5. What seed might we plant today that could make the most difference to improving food security?
6. Any additions to the ideas or other ideas you have?

The following is a summary of feedback from participants on gaps for further consideration:

- Access to groceries after hospital discharge
- Equipment access for existing and new farmers
- Online usage can be barrier for some
- Education - how to reduce food waste, meal planning
- Need low-barrier access to food, especially for youth
- Information/needs of Indigenous communities
- Education on legalities of selling surplus produce
- Connectivity for rural area food security challenges
- Selling local food should be collaborative, not competitive
- Including childcare in these initiatives to give space to parents and to provide food-positive experiences to kids
- Connecting clients with garden buddies for surplus food
- Including Indigenous partners and food sovereignty principles

CENTRAL CARIBOO COMMUNITY FOOD HUB

PROJECT ASSESSMENT & COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION

FEBRUARY 9 2022

Feedback on top 3 food security challenges in our community for further consideration:

- Community greenhouse like a community garden
- Gardening, especially start-up education
- Year-round access to growing
- Restricting panic buying of food during disasters
- Multiple barriers add to the challenges of food insecurity, such as needing childcare, or having the time to garden, etc.

Challenges or Barriers to the Project Vision for further consideration:

- securing physical space
- keeping momentum
- sustainability and funding
- participation from community and clients (especially if faced with stigmatization in the past)
- lack of political will
- awareness of local resources for supplies and education
- preventing burnout for community champions
- Ensuring the Hub is promoted through different channels that include social media, but also other means (ie: newspaper, etc).

Additional ideas for the Project Vision:

- Restaurants providing seasonal menu's to help with food education. What is locally grown, how do you prepare it?
- Buddy system- pairing a local gardener's surplus with a family facing food security issues. They can donate a surplus of their harvest directly to their 'buddy', opportunities for knowledge/labour exchange.
- Engagement focused food drives to create connection AND food.

THE CENTRAL CARIBOO **FOOD** COMMUNITY **HUB**

uniting the community
around food



What we know from all of our research and observations is that local food security is a very complex issue that will never be fully resolved by one idea or community alone. It must be addressed collectively, by multiple stakeholders, and through multiple initiatives. Through our environmental scan and gap analysis, however, we can narrow down our focus areas to the most relevant and impactful solutions specific to our community in the following ways:

HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY

Short term:

- Support food access organizations with storage, processing, and distribution
- Facilitate local food recovery, distribution, and tax rebates
- Explore increased school meal programs and support where possible with shared facilities and program delivery

Long term:

- Consistent advocacy for income equality or basic income policies
- Create interdepartmental municipal government body or liaison to work with regional district and community stakeholders
- Develop food supply emergency/food resilience management plan for the municipality

COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY

Short term:

- Create a market for local food sales and deliveries to increase viability & resiliency of local food production
- Create a shared facility for value-adding, processing, and storing local & perishable foods

Long term:

- Participate in regional and municipal advocacy and policy development, such as incentivized land use policies
- Continue and build on strategic plan and next steps developed via Williams Lake Food Policy Council

THE CENTRAL CARIBOO **FOOD** COMMUNITY **HUB**

SUMMARY OF SOLUTIONS:

- 1.) Actively engage and participate with municipal and regional local food system planning:
 - Nominate a Community Food Hub representative to sit on Central Cariboo Agricultural Development Advisory Committee (CRD) each term.
 - Work with City of Williams Lake staff to develop the Williams Lake Agricultural Steering Committee, or designate a local food system liaison
 - Develop an emergency food supply/food resilience management plan
 - Support and work with the Community Food Hub to update and meet long-term local food system targets in OCP and existing local food system research
- 2.) Support local producers to grow the local food sector by implementing priority area solutions laid out in the 2016 Branching Out Report, namely marketing and sales, labour, and farm productivity:
 - Targeted, subsidized workshop series to train and support farms in priority areas
 - Continue to develop, train, and support local producers in remaining priority areas
 - Add meat producer supports to priority areas, in accessing markets and processing
- 3.) Develop a facility that can provide storage (cold and dry) as a centralized warehouse and distribution centre for emergency food providers and local food producers
- 4.) Create a social enterprise for local food sales and deliveries to increase viability of local food production, both retail and online
- 5.) Purchase or contract delivery vehicle to support distribution to organizations and clients in an effort to reduce barriers for the marginally to moderate food insecure
- 6.) Recover and transport fresh food donations from local farmers at every farmers market throughout the season, for donation to local organizations. Track donation values on behalf of farmers, to apply for Agricultural Food Donation tax credit

THE CENTRAL CARIBOO **FOOD** COMMUNITY **HUB**

SUMMARY OF SOLUTIONS:

- 7.) Partner with SD 27 to renovate the Williams Lake Secondary school kitchen, and utilize as a shared space for both increased nutritious food access to students and as a value-added processing facility for local food producers. Can also be used to process fresh food donations from local organizations, into ready-to-eat, value added meals, or to package and freeze recovered foods from restaurants
- 8.) Online food aid/subsidized food access options for clients we miss through other organizations (grocery cards from % of sales or monthly donations, support for/participation in nutrition coupon program)
- 9.) House a Central Cariboo region seed library, and work with local growers and secure funding to produce and replenish seed
- 10.) Monthly newsletters and/or meet-ups with partnership/membership network - monitoring results, highlights, resource pooling, peer support & motivation
- 11.) Work with Indigenous leaders and community members to support their food sovereignty & security goals
- 12.) Work with partner organizations to develop classes, workshops, or events to increase awareness, and foster appreciation and support for food security and food sovereignty:
 - Semi-monthly sessions for target groups on available social assistance programs or other supplements to reduce food costs
 - Food-positive activities and education for at-risk youth
 - Culturally-appropriate community meals led by Indigenous neighbours
 - "garden buddy" network: pair a gardener with a client in need to donate extra produce over growing season
- 13.) Research potential for an agricultural tool library or incubator farm for the region

RECOMMENDATIONS: BUILDING CAPACITY AND RESILIENCY

- VISION FOR THE FOOD HUB
- LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH KEY ORGANIZATIONS



The recommended vision for the Food Hub meets the project's Visions and Goals, and First Year Successes, in the following key areas:

ENGAGEMENT:

- by building dignity, discretion, and cultural sensitivity into our programming, we are able to reach more community members and their needs, especially those who are moderately to marginally food insecure and our Indigenous neighbours.
- food security stakeholders are invited to provide input, share resources, and identify priorities for local food security during the planning and development phases.
- after an action plan is in place, a detailed partnership and resource model can be developed.

CAPACITY BUILDING:

- by stacking functions, we are able to reduce food insecurity by adding logistical and infrastructural supports to emergency food services, through a facility that also builds and supports local food production capacity.
- by securing partnerships, we are able to build capacity not just for the Food Hub but for our partners' own food security goals that may otherwise be out of reach, particularly in areas of the project vision that require significant funding, infrastructure, or staff resources.

ACTION-ORIENTED:

- the Food Hub vision is predicated on core values outlined in the Business Case, and executed through the action-oriented project solutions and development timeline.
- all local food available for emergency food donations is recovered on behalf of farmers, compensated, stored, and distributed to partner organizations, and all local food available to consumers is given a market.

SUSTAINABILITY:

- through the Environmental Scan, we are able to ensure that the vision for the Food Hub is relevant to our community needs, and by incorporating revenue generation, we are ensuring that its operations are self-sustaining and local food production is more viable.
- multi-functional operations ensure that the Food Hub is more sustainable into the future by meeting multiple needs and goals within the local food system, rather than fluctuating or temporary needs. This allows the Food Hub's services to be available during emergencies or food shortages.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH KEY ORGANIZATIONS

Ongoing and engaged partnerships will be critical to the Food Hub's success not only by way of shared resources, but also in ensuring the Hub's activities are made accountable and relevant to the community's food security needs, especially for our target populations. The following list of confirmed and prospective partnerships outlines some of the key resources and positive outcomes we hope to achieve through the Food Hub Vision and 1-5 year development timeline:

Williams Lake Food Policy Council:

- The Williams Lake Food Policy Council secured the funding in 2016 to develop a local food Strategic Plan (Branching Out report), but was limited in the resources required to further execute that plan. The Food Hub Vision will make use of the valuable work already done and assist in carrying out the Plan's objectives.
- The Food Hub will add capacity to local food system policy work and advocacy.
- The Food Hub will house our existing regional seed library, which is currently in need of a home.
- The Food Hub will assist with Community Garden management, when and where needed.

Interior Health:

- With advisory support from our Interior Health Dietician, the Food Hub can assist in meeting mutual goals around improved community health outcomes related to food insecurity.

School District 27:

- The Food Hub and School District 27 both share a need for cold/dry storage and kitchen space, creating a great opportunity to pool resources and partner on this area of the project.

Salvation Army:

- The Food Hub team has worked closely with organizations on the front lines of emergency food access, to ensure that Hub activities meet their needs. The Food Hub vision supports the great work these organizations are already doing, and fills gaps such as coordination, distribution, donations, increased food recovery from local farmers or food businesses, and food processing/storage.



LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH KEY ORGANIZATIONS

Women's Contact Society:

- Supporting women and single mothers, as well as the resource limitations for organizations like the Women's Contact Society, is a top priority for the Food Hub. We will meet unique needs for women and single mothers by incorporating a grocery card program through the Hub and assisting with food donations, particularly transport and storage.

Williams Lake First Nation:

- Community meals built around the beauty of Indigenous foods will foster positive relationships, compassion, curiosity, and appreciation.
- Support in expanding and teaching in their community garden space

Cariboo Regional District:

- The Food Hub will have representation and consistent engagement with our regional government on the Cariboo Regional District's Agricultural Development Advisory Committee (ADAC) for the Central Cariboo region, as of 2022.

City of Williams Lake:

- Liaise with designated staff member on local food and agriculture indicators and progress to ensure goals are being met.

Williams Lake Farmers' Market:

- The Food Hub's research and development has relied heavily on input from the Williams Lake Farmers' Market as the primary existing sales outlet for local food. As a partner, the Food Hub will support the market wherever possible, as well as its vendors by providing access to more customers and support collecting perishable food donations and facilitating tax rebates for agricultural producers.

BGC Williams Lake: with a distribution vehicle, increased food donations, and/or support staff and volunteers, we could assist BGC Williams Lake with some of its food security goals and programming, such as keeping their Necessity Nook stocked, assisting with cooking/nutrition classes, or assisting in reinstating food programs such their "Basic Needs/Brighter Future" program or "Leave No Youth Hungry".

Cariboo Chilcotin Conservation Society: with the shared goal of gleaning as much usable local food as possible, partnering with the Conservation Society can meet the needs of both organizations in increasing local food availability and reducing food waste. Potential for shared project funding.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Food costing exercise from 3 local retailers, using National Nutritious Food Basket (NNFB) guidelines to calculate and average the monthly cost of a healthy diet for a family of 4 in Williams Lake (slide 11):

FreshCo

Position on the Food List	Product	Volume to Weight Conversion	Price in Kg	Yield Conversion Factor	Converted Price in g	Weekly Amounts in g																													
						Female		Male		Pregnant		Lactating		Male		Male		Male		Male		Male		Male		Male		Male							
						2-3	4-8	9-13	14-18	19-30	31-50	51-70	over 70	<19	<19	19-30	19-30	31-50	31-50	51-70	51-70	2-3	4-8	9-13	14-18	19-30	31-50	31-50	51-70	51-70					
1	Green beans, frozen		\$2.63	1	0.0026	175	210	245	245	420	420	245	245	245	420	420	245	245	420	420	245	245	420	420	245	245	420	420	245	245	420	420	245	245	
2	Broccoli, frozen, spears, boiled, drained		\$6.94	1	0.0069	105	105	140	140	175	175	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	
3	Peas, green, frozen		\$2.83	1	0.0028	175	210	245	245	420	420	245	245	245	420	420	245	245	420	420	245	245	420	420	245	245	420	420	245	245	420	420	245	245	
4	Pepper, sweet, green, fresh		\$4.33	1.22	0.0053	105	105	140	140	175	175	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	
5	Lettuce, romaine, fresh		\$13.00	1.06	0.0138	175	210	245	245	315	315	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	
6	Spinach, frozen		\$4.94	1	0.0049	105	105	140	140	175	175	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	
7	Winter squash (e.g. pumpkin, butternut or acorn squash), fresh		\$3.89	1.48	0.0058	105	105	140	140	175	175	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	
8	Carrots, fresh		\$2.87	1.12	0.0022	250	250	420	420	420	420	250	250	250	420	420	250	250	420	420	250	250	420	420	250	250	420	420	250	250	420	420	250	250	
9	Sweet potato, fresh		\$3.67	1.49	0.0055	105	105	140	140	175	175	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
10	Potato, fresh (any type)		\$3.23	1.45	0.0047	245	245	280	280	280	280	245	245	245	280	280	245	245	280	280	245	245	280	280	245	245	280	280	245	245	280	280	245	245	
11	Corn, frozen		\$2.24	1	0.0022	140	140	175	175	245	245	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	
12	Cabbage, fresh		\$1.91	1.25	0.0074	175	210	245	245	350	350	315	315	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	
13	Lettuce, iceberg, fresh		\$6.00	1.05	0.0063	140	210	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280	280
14	Cucumber, fresh		\$7.79	1.03	0.0080	140	175	210	210	245	245	210	210	210	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245
15	Celery, fresh		\$5.78	1.12	0.0065	175	210	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	
16	Mushroom, fresh		\$8.71	1.03	0.0090	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	
17	Onion, fresh		\$4.31	1.11	0.0048	140	175	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245
18	Tomato, canned (no salt added, or low in sodium)	1 ml = 1.014 g	\$1.24	1	0.0012	280	315	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	
19	Tomato, fresh		\$4.31	1.1	0.0048	70	70	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
20	Vegetables, mixed, frozen, boiled, drained		\$2.63	1	0.0026	210	210	280	280	350	350	280	280	280	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	
21	Apple, fresh		\$4.31	1.3	0.0056	210	210	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245
22	Banana, fresh		\$1.45	1.56	0.0023	280	280	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420
23	Grapes, fresh		\$5.50	1.04	0.0057	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	
24	Oranges, fresh		\$2.13	1.37	0.0029	210	210	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245
25	Pear, canned (in water)	1 ml = 1.03 g	\$7.50	1	0.0075	105	105	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	
26	Strawberries, frozen		\$6.62	1	0.0066	35	35	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	
27	Peaches, canned (in water)	1 ml = 1.03 g	\$7.50	1	0.0075	105	105	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	
28	Cantaloupe, melon, fresh		\$2.75	1.96	0.0054	70	70	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
29	Fortified soy beverage, (unsweetened or original)	1 ml = 1.035 g	\$3.69	1	0.0037	770	1400	1750	1750	875	875	1680	1680	1750	1750	875	875	875	875	875	875	875	875	875	875	875	875	875	875	875	875	875	875	875	
30	Tofu, firm or extra firm		\$7.70	1	0.0077	105	140	175	175	105	105	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	
31	Hummus		\$14.85	1	0.0149	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35		
32	Chickpeas, canned (no salt added, or low in sodium)	1 ml = 1.014 g	\$1.80	1	0.0018	49	49	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	
33	Beans, kidney, canned (no salt added, or low in sodium)	1 ml = 1.018 g	\$1.80	1	0.0018	49	49	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	
34	Beans, white, canned (no salt added, or low in sodium)	1 ml = 1.11 g	\$1.80	1	0.0018	49	49	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	
35	Beans, black, canned (no salt added, or low in sodium)	1 ml = 1.014 g	\$1.80	1	0.0018	49	49	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	
36	Lentils, dry		\$2.41	0.34	0.0008	49	49	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	
37	Sunflower seeds, unsalted																																		

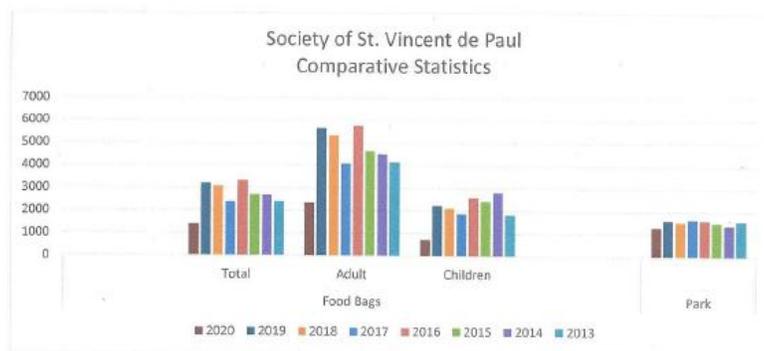
appendices

APPENDIX B

2020 emergency food access data (slide 15) - TOTAL # of individuals registered for hamper/food box distribution (slide 12):

**Society of Saint Vincent De Paul
Sacred Heart Conference
Comparative Statistics**

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Food Bags								
Total	1,396	3,211	3,085	2,387	3,318	2,698	2,677	2,398
Adult	2,340	5,663	5,337	4,101	5,769	4,636	4,513	4,168
Children	723	2,235	2,096	1,865	2,585	2,417	2,812	1,820
Park	1,292	1,615	1,524	1,651	1,622	1,494	1,399	1,567



Society of St Vincent de Paul: see above graph

Salvation Army Food Bank:

1515 people are registered with our food bank and have accessed monthly hampers throughout the year (2020).

Women's Contact Society:

Good Food Box Hampers distributed: 325

appendices

APPENDIX C

Williams Lake Farmers' Market nutrition coupon program data for part 3 years (slide 12):

2021 - 3rd year in Program.

Partners are the Cariboo Friendship Society and the Cariboo Chilcotin Child Development Society.

- 25 Vendors participated in the program.
- 4249 (\$3 value) coupons were issued
- 4006 coupons were redeemed, for a total of \$12,018 in funds reimbursed to vendors
- Redemption rate: 94% which is exciting BUT may reflect some coupons coming from out of area with our fruit truck vendors.

2020 - 2nd year in program.

Partner was the Cariboo Friendship Society.

- 21 Vendors participated in the program.
- 1702 coupons were redeemed, for a total of \$5106 in funds reimbursed to vendors
-

2019 - first year we participated in the Program.

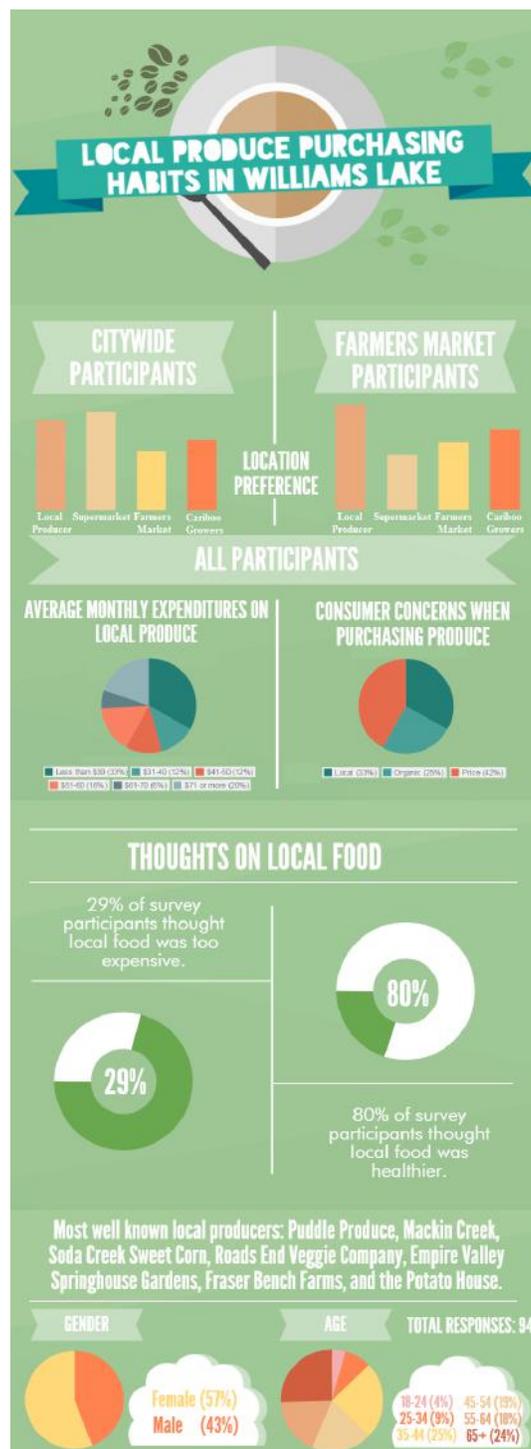
Partner was the Cariboo Friendship Society.

- 14 Vendors participated in the program.
- 1177 coupons were redeemed, for a total of \$3541 in funds reimbursed to vendors

appendices

APPENDIX D

summary of 2015 local produce purchasing research study (slide 26):

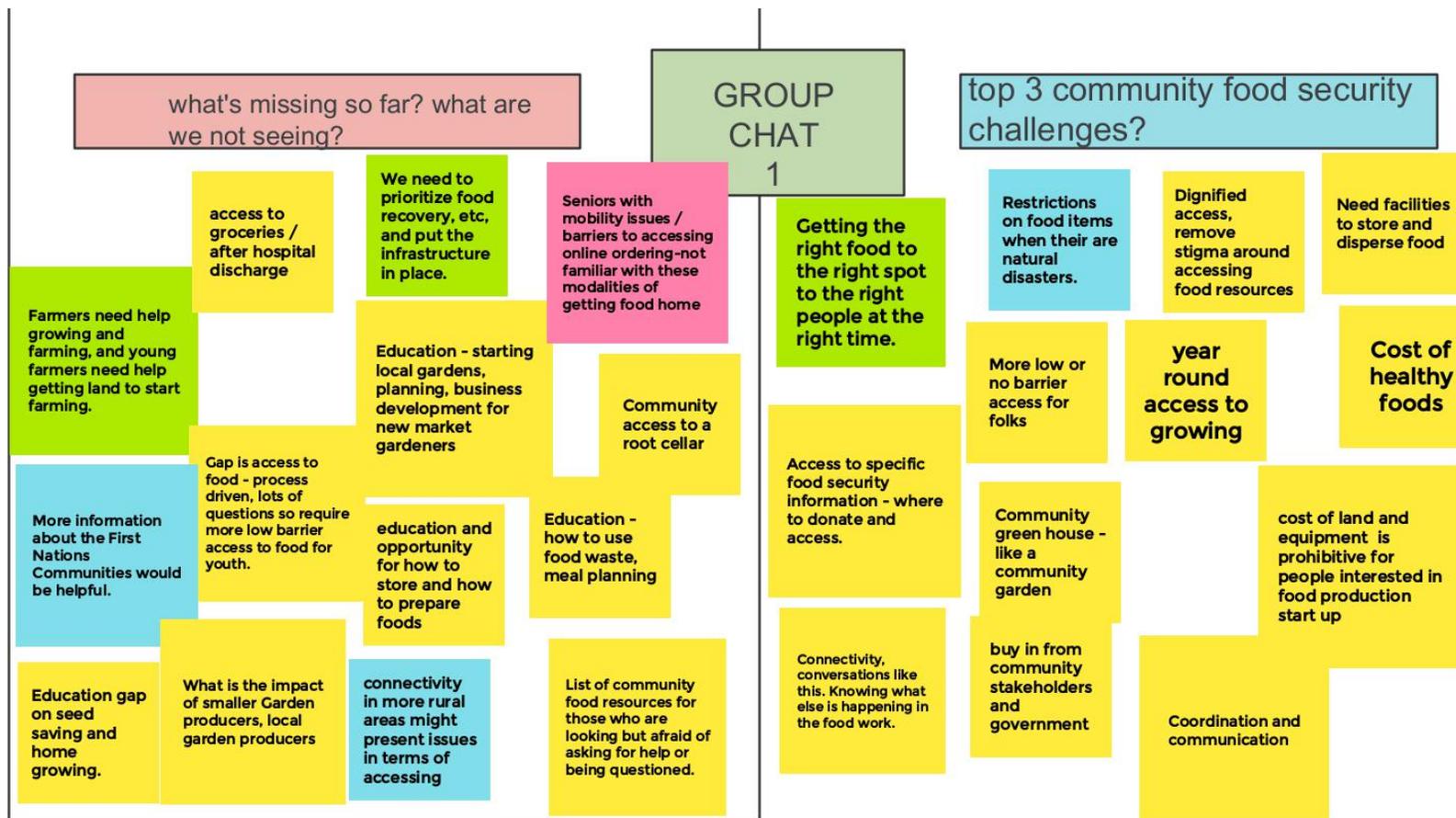


appendices

APPENDIX E

JamBoard frames from Community Engagement

Session - February 9th, 2022



appendices

GROUP CHAT 1

what's missing so far? what are we not seeing?

How to get more people to be community champions from multiple age groups. Ways to cultivate champions!

Including Childcare in these initiatives to give space for the parents and to include the next generation in food education.

Breaking down the assumption that gardening needs to look a certain way or create a certain aesthetic.

Including First Nations Partners and food sovereignty practices.

Connecting community member/family with a gardening buddy, to access the surplus produced.

Flash Foods app - set up more retailers

communication of needs - support for new entrepreneurs, need recognition that more local food is marketable and profitable

Some gaps in the informal community work - for example hampers created through the school district, there may be other food provision programs not listed in report.

People not knowing how to grow, or feeling overwhelmed to grow. partially due to not being from the region, or the cost of starting your own garden.

top 3 community food security challenges?

Knowing what other organizations are doing in terms to programming, and grant applications, etc. Sharing capacity and resources.

Barriers to access Food Bank. ie due to transportation. Clients have been asking for deliveries which is difficult due to staffing, funding fuel shortages, etc

Barriers to accessing the Food Banks, ie, transportation Clients asking for deliveries, which is not sustainable due to staff, funding, fuel, etc.

Important for community members to know where they can donate. ie BGC has a necessity nook that they need food donations for.

Communication that food should be COLLABORATIVE and not COMPETITIVE - as a food grower, I would not want to 'compete' with Puddle Produce or other market gardeners, still need to make a livable wage.

Access to education on legalities of selling surplus produce; making an easy-to-use framework or role models available

Challenge in Williams Lake is access to land. Is the city of Williams Lake the area to be exploring, or should we be looking outside the boundaries?

Connecting growers / wannabe growers with land owners; promoting education on building healthy soils to grow healthy foods

Who are the 10 different groups? Word needs to get out - who is doing what work and how can folks access emergency food and where the food can be donated. - Food online hub.

Multiple barriers add to the challenges of food insecurity, such as needing childcare, or having the time to garden, etc.

Connecting resources - Community Garden offers education, communicating this to community members. (What other resources do I have access to?)

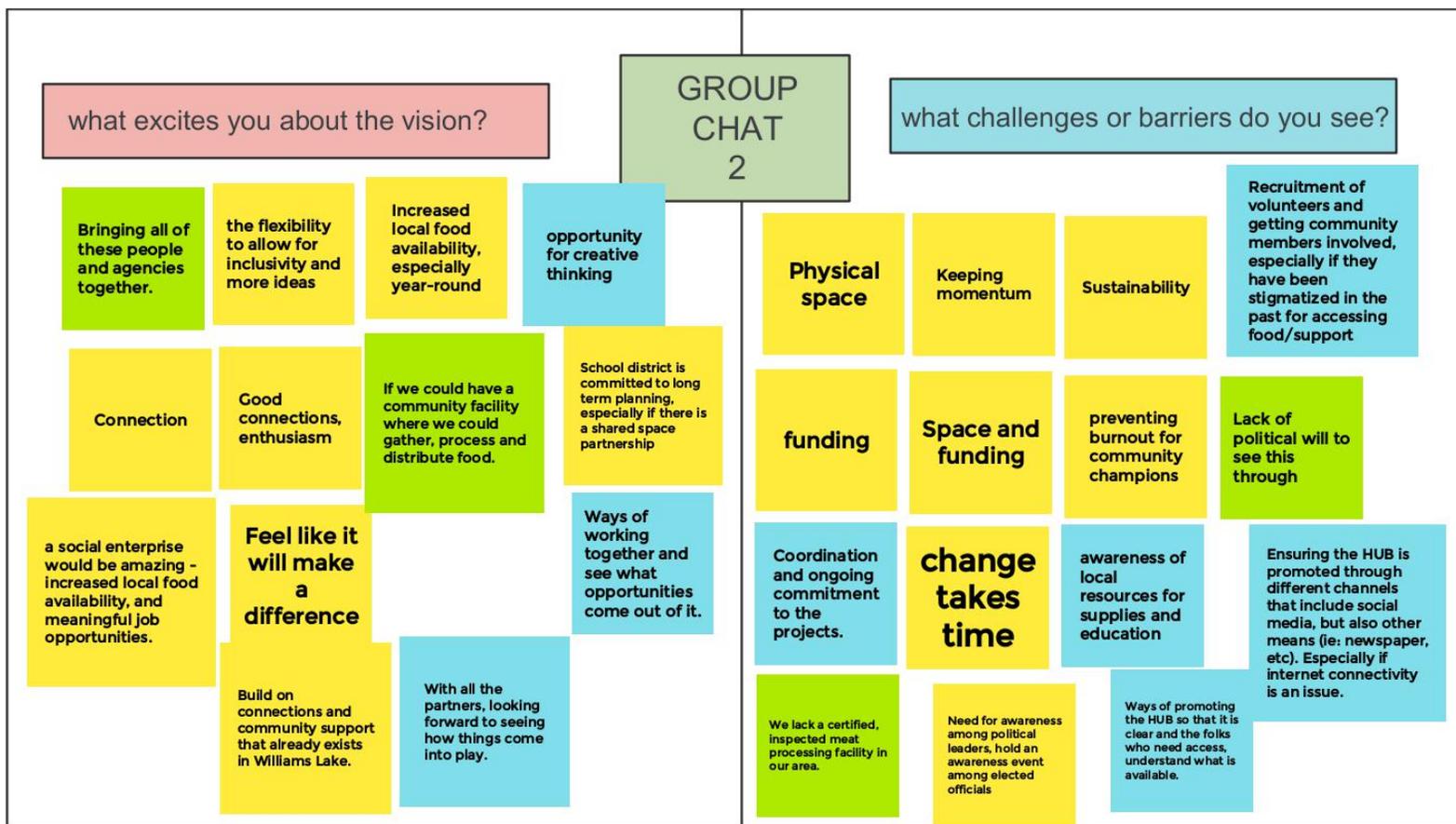
Access to lower-middle class community members - those who can afford food, but not consistently healthy, local food, particularly through winter months

appendices

APPENDIX E

JamBoard frames from Community Engagement

Session - February 9th, 2022

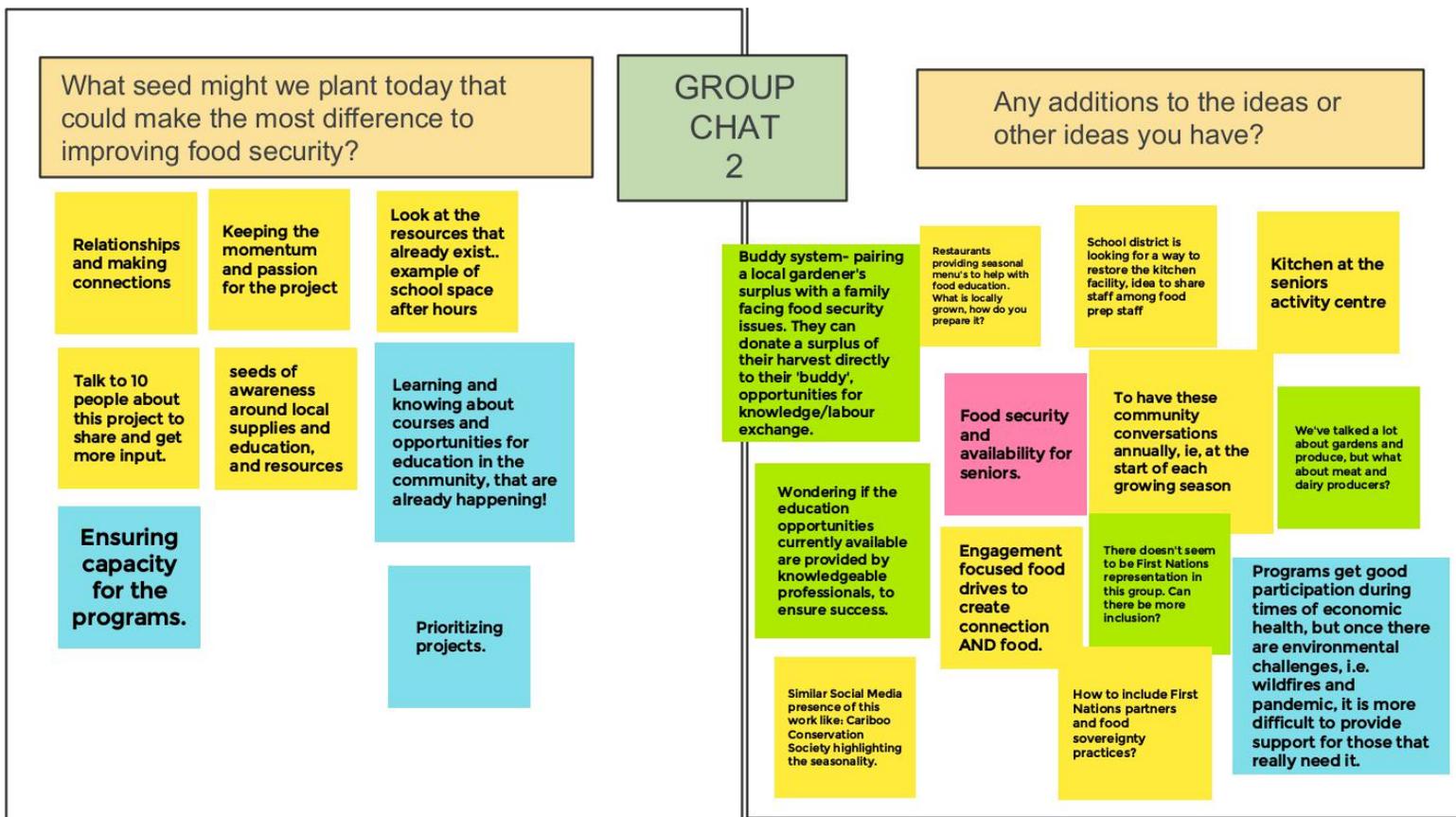


APPENDICES

APPENDIX E

JamBoard frames from Community Engagement

Session - February 9th, 2022



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