



# Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan





## Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan

**Who developed:** Healthy Food Healthy People  
Work Group

**For more info:** [www.healthierniagarafalls.org](http://www.healthierniagarafalls.org)

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Work Group



### About Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative

The Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative (CHNFC) is a platform designed for residents to be part of the solution in creating a healthier Niagara Falls. The Collaborative is deeply engaged in the community and provides tools and support to residents to make a change. The Collaborative also partners with local businesses and non-profit organizations (faith-based, education, social and human services organizations) to address issues that impact the health and well-being of the city and its residents.

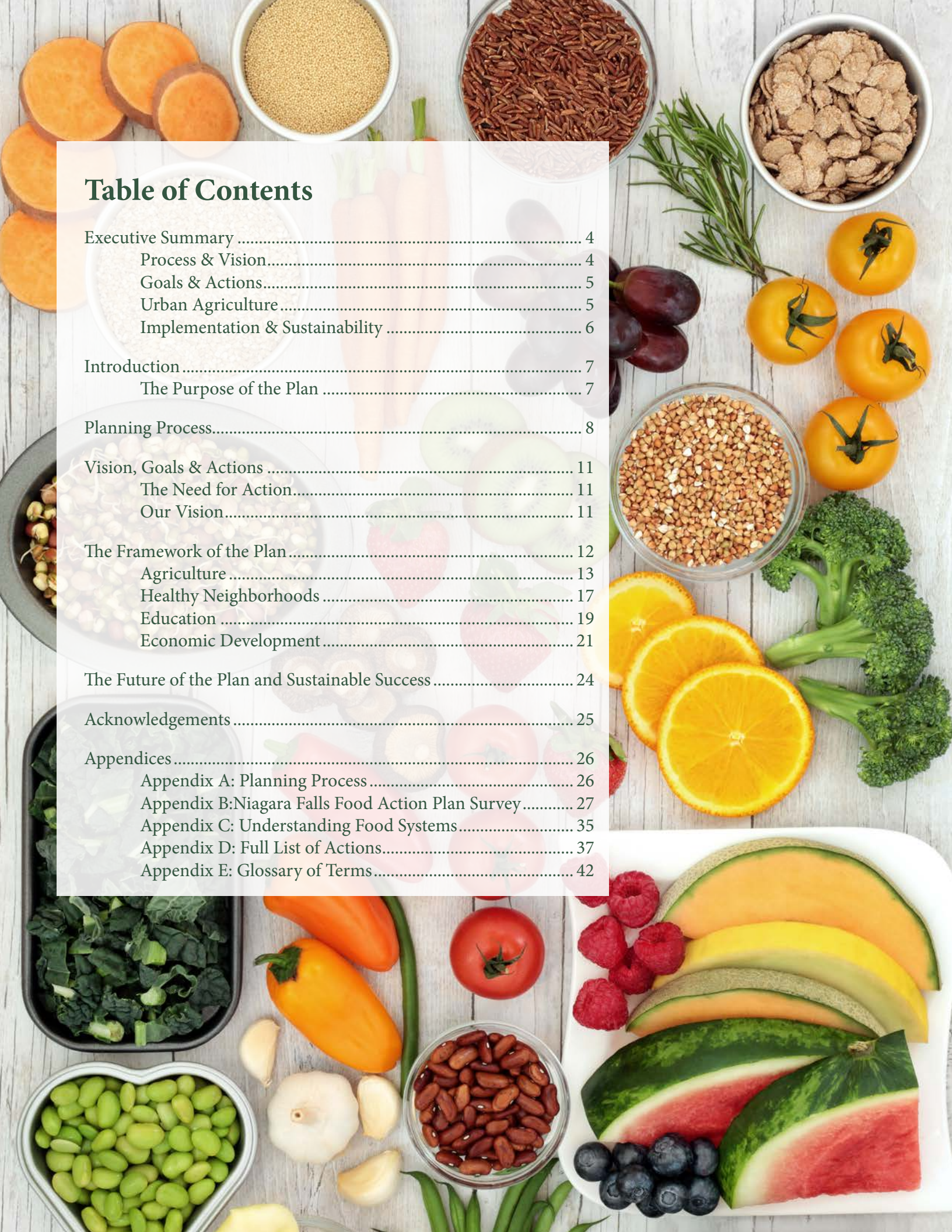
**For more information, contact us:**

(716) 777-1034

[info@healthierniagarafalls.org](mailto:info@healthierniagarafalls.org)  
[www.HealthierNiagaraFalls.org](http://www.HealthierNiagaraFalls.org)

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# Executive Summary

In January 2017, the Healthy Food Healthy People work group, part of the Creating a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative, along with experienced food planning consultants Amy Baskes and Joanna Helon, embarked on a year-long planning process to create the Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan. This resident-driven/informed process was grounded in the belief that all residents of Niagara Falls should have access to nutritious and affordable food.

The NFLFAP provides a framework of common goals and actions that serve to bring together residents, schools, community organizations, businesses and local government in supporting a healthy, strong, and resilient local food system. The plan's goals and actions represent those that were identified by residents and stakeholders, ranked highest amongst subcommittee members and represent those with the greatest potential for a positive impact on the unique food related issues facing the Niagara Falls community.

The plan seeks to address the results of significant social issues such as poverty, underemployment and unemployment that contribute to inequalities in access to fresh, affordable food for Niagara Falls residents.

## Process & Vision

The Healthy Food Healthy People work group began with a simple vision of having Niagara Falls residents understand the value of, be able to, and choose to eat healthy foods. After administering the Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan survey to over 350 Niagara Falls residents, in 2016, understanding the barriers facing Niagara Falls residents when it comes to accessing healthy and affordable food was clearer and contributed to the advancement of the Local Food Action Plan.

In early 2017, the formal planning process began, which was intentionally designed to be bottom-up, rather than a top down or prescriptive plan—so as to include residents' voices and perspectives that reflected their needs and interests. Through the resident-informed planning process, the vision evolved to tackling food access issues in an effective and meaningful way in four priority areas: **Agriculture, Healthy Neighborhoods, Education, and Economic Development**. These priority framework areas helped the work group to focus their efforts in a more strategic and efficient way. By the end of the planning process, more than 400 unique community voices informed what resulted in the final plan.

## Goals & Actions

The plan is organized in such a way that residents and other stakeholders can engage and act on any of the proposed actions under the priority areas which are broken into sub-themes, each with its own goal statement.

<i>Agriculture</i>	<i>Healthy Neighborhoods</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Economic Development</i>
<i>Urban Agriculture</i>	<i>Access</i>	<i>Consumer Education</i>	<i>Economic Development</i>
<i>Community Gardens</i>	<i>Civic Engagement</i>	<i>Schools</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
<i>Farmers Markets</i>			<i>Workforce Development</i>

The proposed actions in the plan were designed as clear steps that can be taken to realize the tangible goals set forth for an improved food system in Niagara Falls. Each goal also has examples of promising practices that are shared and featured as inspiration for what could work in the Niagara Falls Community.

## Urban Agriculture

In simple terms, urban agriculture is the growing or producing of food in a city. The phrase “urban agriculture” is very often confused with community gardening which is more about neighborhood revitalization and less about scaled food production. Urban agriculture is focused on commercial or large-scale food production within an urban setting.

### Goal Statement

Urban agriculture in Niagara Falls is a source of employment, food access, and viable markets.

#### a. Proposed Actions

- i. Create policies that promote and support urban agriculture opportunities in the city.
- ii. Create policies that incentivize alternative growing practices and provide supporting education to foster sustainable development (e.g., aquaponics, hydroponics, hoop houses, etc.).

*Agriculture: According to the USDA, around 15% of the world’s food is now grown in urban areas (04/28/2017). Niagara County is home to 760 farms. Many people tend to think that the concept of agriculture (the practice or work of farming) in cities is new and innovative, yet it has been the norm since farming and agriculture became a thing centuries ago. It wasn’t until recently (within the past 100 years or so) that other trends began to emerge, due to, in large part, to an increase in industrial-scale agriculture, synthetic fertilization, and fossil fuel-powered transportation options. The trends are now reversing as people become more interested in and passionate about where their food comes from.*

### **Community Snapshot**

*According to the 2014 Community Health Needs Assessment for the City of Niagara Falls, city residents are more likely than populations in other geographies to face health issues related to: chronic disease, mental health, nutrition/obesity, adequate pregnancy prevention programs, tobacco use, dental health, and preventative health care.*

*According to the Mobile Safety Net Community Report for the City of Niagara Falls:*

- *1 in 7 (about 15%) of the most vulnerable residents, such as seniors and children, have an urgent concern for food*
- *Income is a large barrier to food access with 70% of the city's population dependent on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) --formerly known as food stamps*
- *Niagara County ranks among the five worst counties in New York state in terms of health outcomes*
- *44% of the city's population is either in poverty or struggling financially*
- *1 in 3 children live in poverty*

### **Promising Practices**

#### **1. Project Eats –Brooklyn, NY**

Project EATS is a New York City based program—in the Brownsville neighborhood—that collaborates with residents, schools and local organizations to transform underused lots in working class and low income communities into sustainable, chemical free, neighborhood farms. They activate urban nature, strengthen neighborhood-based economies, and increase the quality of learning and skills individuals and families can access in their communities.

*Website:* [www.projecteats.org](http://www.projecteats.org)

*Social Media:* [Facebook.com/projecteatsnyc](https://www.facebook.com/projecteatsnyc)

[@projecteats](https://www.instagram.com/projecteats)

[@ProjectEATS](https://twitter.com/ProjectEATS)

### **Implementation & Sustainability**

The Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan is designed to be a roadmap to improving food security and access for the residents of Niagara Falls. The plan is designed to be implemented by four key constituencies: residents, government and elected officials, large public and private institutions, and service providers. The Resident Engagement Council of the Creating a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative will spearhead the implementation of the plan with the Healthy Food Healthy People work group providing guidance, technical assistance and tracking for this living document.

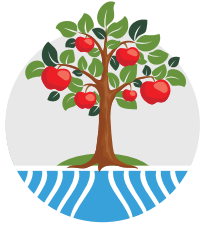
Several Niagara Falls city departments, including Community Development, Planning, and Public Works, and the City's elected officials, will play a vital role in the future of the plan as changes to existing food policies are addressed and the introduction and adoption of new policies take place.

Ultimately, the success of this plan will be decided by the participation and cooperation of these stakeholders and many others including farmers, business owners, tourism professionals and local universities.

Please visit the following sites for ongoing updates and additional information related to the plan:

*Website:* [www.healthiarniagarafalls.org](http://www.healthiarniagarafalls.org)

*Facebook:* [www.facebook.com/HealthyFoodHealthyPeopleNF](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFoodHealthyPeopleNF)



# Introduction

Niagara Falls residents face very challenging health outcomes and socioeconomic conditions. According to the 2014 Community Health Needs Assessment for the City of Niagara Falls (American Institutes for Research), Niagara Falls residents are more likely than populations in other geographies to face health issues related to: chronic disease, mental health, nutrition/obesity, adequate pregnancy prevention programs, tobacco use, dental health, and preventative health care. The economic downturn experienced by the Niagara region has left high levels of unemployment and poverty, with many residents using public assistance programs, including SNAP—Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as food stamps).

Many programs exist to assist Niagara Falls residents, but unmet needs persist. Recent work by the City of Niagara Falls has pointed to three factors for this gap. Social services are: 1) not coordinated 2) not trusted by residents and 3) haven't created empowerment but, instead, dependence. Additionally, Niagara Falls residents feel isolated from the rest of the region and the resources that exist within.

By way of Mayor Paul Dyster, a policy initiative formed, addressing a number of key equity concerns from access to health care, to neighborhood empowerment, to quality of affordable housing, to availability of healthy food. Realizing the need to address these gaps in services, the Mayor's Task Group for a Healthier Niagara Falls launched in 2009. A leadership council grew out of the original Task Group in 2015. Over the course of the last nine years, the Task Group has evolved and formed new iterations that continue to address issues of neighborhood health, safety and livability. In 2013, the Healthy Food Healthy People (HFHP) work group was created, as a result of a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant that looked to develop grassroots coalitions. HFHP has grown over the course of the last five years and now more than 25 community organizations, local stakeholders and concerned residents are engaged and together discuss how to improve health outcomes for Niagara Falls residents.

## The Purpose of the Plan

The Steering Committee of the Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan—formed in the Fall of 2016 and made up of six members of HFHP—made it their mission, early on, to ensure that the plan is resident-focused and highly actionable, drawing from residents' first-hand recommendations and feedback.

Prior to identifying the need for a local food action plan, a community survey was conducted and initiated this process. The plan was informed by qualitative research in the form of community-based participatory research and focus groups, which were held to engage the Niagara Falls community in the conversation and to directly assist in forming policy recommendations to be included in the plan. Focus groups were held with the following sectors: Niagara Falls Youth City Council, Niagara Falls businesses, urban agriculture, agriculture/producers, and Resident Engagement Council. Four priority areas (1. Agriculture, 2. Healthy Neighborhoods, 3. Education, and 4. Economic Development) formed the foundation of our planning process, and several actionable items and policy recommendations emerged as a result of this process. The policy recommendations are fully intended to become adopted with the proper supports of key community stakeholders and policymakers, and would likely require targeted resident advocacy prior to their implementation.



# Planning Process

The planning process was intentionally designed to be bottom-up, rather than a top-down or prescriptive plan—so as to include residents’ voices and perspectives in creating the Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan. Healthy Food Healthy People (HFHP) members, who represented community organizations and neighborhoods, generated the content of the plan. Steering Committee members provided leadership throughout the project, and their expertise shaped the final plan. The exchange between HFHP and Steering Committee is mapped out in Appendix A. The goals and actions included in the final plan reflect more than 400 total community voices. The following is a detailed chronology of the process that led to the development of the Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan.

## July—September 2016

### 1. Identified the Community’s Baseline Ideas/Interest in Local/Healthy Food Improvements

HFHP conducted a Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan survey with over 350 residents to understand where, how, and why Niagara Falls residents buy their food and to gather input on possible community solutions for healthy eating, education opportunities, infrastructure possibilities, and economic development strategies.

Highlights of the survey, grouped by the four original framework areas, include:

#### *Healthy Neighborhoods:*

- 20-25% of residents in the North End, Hyde Park, and South End report that they often ran out of food and did not have enough money to get more

#### *Agriculture:*

- 73% of residents say they have eaten food that is grown in the community, while an additional 17% say they would eat food from the community if it were grown safely
- 20% of residents are interested in growing their own food

#### *Education:*

- 84% of residents believe locally grown food is either important or very important
- Cost and taste were most important factors across all demographics when selecting food; results were more varied for nutritional value and appearance

#### *Service Coordination:*

- Half of residents in the North End travel more than 30 minutes to buy their food; 27% say they travel more than 45 minutes



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For full results of the Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan Consumer Survey, see Appendix B.



## October–December 2016

### 2. Confirmed Leadership

Lisa Tucker French (Field & Fork Network) and Tom Lowe (Niagara University) were named as co-chairs of the HFHP, and were later joined by Rob Sozanski (USA Niagara Development Corporation). Together, they routinely convened over 25 people in monthly meetings worked toward creating a Local Food Action Plan for the city of Niagara Falls. The total list of HFHP members invited included 61 people.

This group reviewed the findings of a selection of other relevant food plans from other communities across the country. They also facilitated a discussion among their members that resulted in a list of the healthy and local food actions already happening in Niagara Falls and those they would like to see added in the community.

Toward the end of 2016, HFHP co-chairs sought outside counsel to facilitate an intentional community-driven process. They secured funding from the New York State Health Foundation for facilitated community engagement. As part of this engagement, a broader leadership team of six Steering Committee members was formed to oversee the planning process. French, Lowe and Sozanski were joined by Krista Ehasz (Create A Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative), Margaret Lapp (Field & Fork Network), and Sarah Obot (Resident Engagement Council).

## January–March 2017

### 3. Developed Framework

HFHP created a framework that outlined four priority areas: **agriculture, healthy neighborhoods, education, and economic development**. Having these key priority areas helped to approach the next phase of research—analyzing other plans and planning focus groups—in a strategic and more efficient way.

### 4. Reviewed Other Plans

First Quarter 2017: HFHP surveyed the landscape for similar plans around the country and found close to 30 nationwide. The Steering Committee closely examined several plans and reports for relevant action items in the four priority areas, with a heavy focus on the *Planning to Eat*, *Growing Together*, and *Columbus Local Food Action Plan* documents.

### 5. Held Deeper Conversations

Second Quarter 2017: Five focus groups were developed and managed by members of the Steering Committee. Questions explored with subject-specific groups reflected the information gathered in the surveys and other food plans and reports. Participants were asked to respond from their own unique experiences and roles in the food system.

- **Five business owners and representatives** participated in the Business Group.
- **Five farmers** participated in Agriculture Group.
- **Five community gardeners** participated in the Urban Agriculture Group.
- **Four resident leaders** participated from the Resident Engagement Council.
- **Nine youth residents** participated from the Niagara Falls Youth City Council.

## April–June 2017

### 6. Developed Proposed Actions

Steering Committee compiled a list of close to 500 proposed action items of concrete ways the food system of Niagara Falls could be improved. These actions were identified through data from the community survey and focus groups, analysis of other plans, and feedback from regular HFHP meetings.

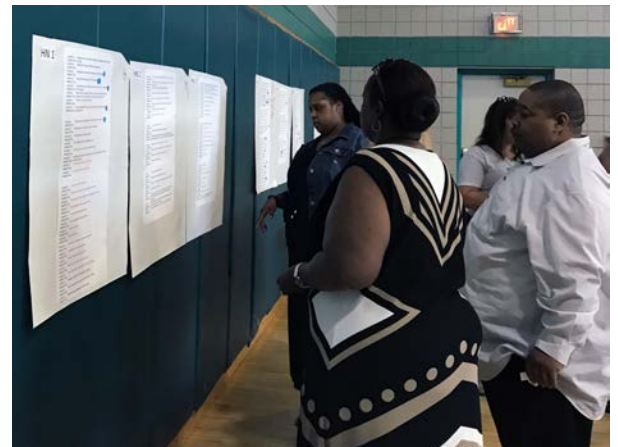
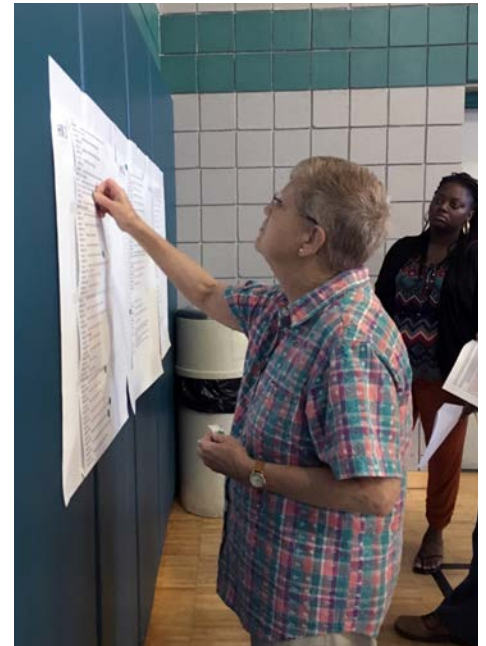
## July–September 2017

### 7. Sorted/Ranked/ Reviewed

HFHP reviewed all the possible action items for completion and inspiration for other possible ideas. Out of all the possible ideas presented, HFHP ranked the top actions and identified those that could be eliminated even at this early stage. This input guided the Steering Committee members who further refined the list, eliminating any duplicate ideas and organizing similar ideas together into wider cluster actions.

### 8. Clustered and Refined

Steering Committee further narrowed the list to 64 total proposed actions, organized into ten sub-themes that fit within the framework. They wrote goal statements for each of the sub-themes based on the actions that supported it. In the September HFHP meeting, members reviewed the goal statements paired with their corresponding actions. They provided feedback and edits, discussing what, if anything, was missing and identifying who in the community was already involved in the actions/goals listed. This final review of the plan provided important community feedback on the total scope and reach, and help set it up for successful implementation.



## October–December 2017

### 9. Drafted Plan

Steering Committee continued work to edit, revise and streamline the plan. Additions were made to include “Promising Practices” that provide examples of the identified action items from models locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

## January–June 2018:

### 10. Finalized Plan

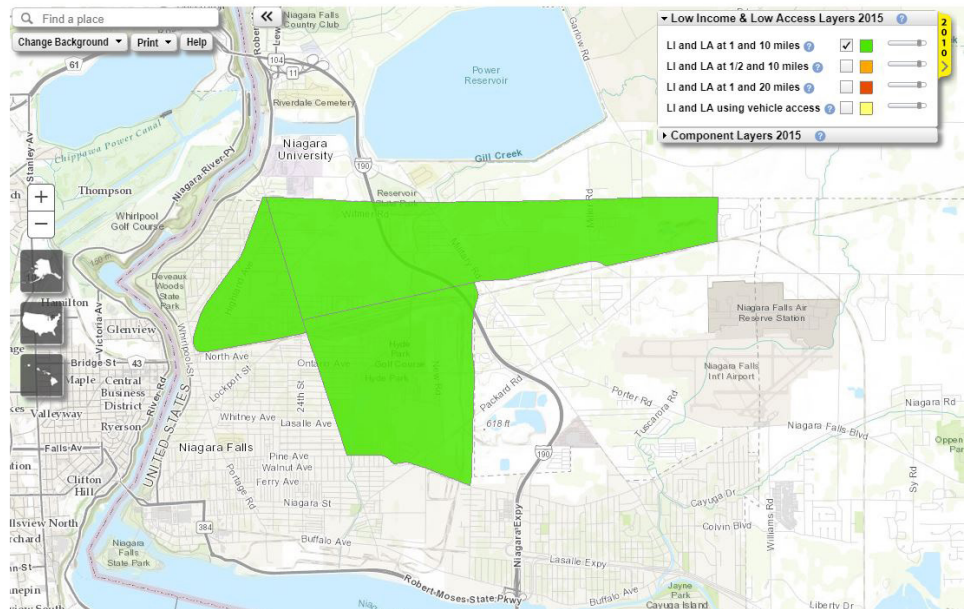
Graphic designers worked in tandem with members of the Steering Committee for logo design as well as general plan design and formatting. At the same time, website design was initiated to present the plan to the public in a user-friendly, easy-to-digest format.



# Vision, Goals & Actions

## The Need for Action

The Hyde Park and Highland neighborhoods are “food deserts,” or neighborhoods that have limited access to affordable and nutritious food; and about 15% of Niagara Falls’ most vulnerable citizens have an urgent need for food. Beyond this large-scale data, even in neighborhoods where food is accessible, we heard many concerns from citizens about the freshness, quality, and variety of food offered. Another resounding concern from residents was the barrier that transportation can present in getting healthy and affordable food for families. The following are actions we should implement because residents of Niagara Falls want and need better access to nutritious and affordable food for their own comfort and well-being, as well as the long-term health outcomes of the City.



**Food desert map highlighting low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is more than one mile from the nearest supermarket.** Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## Our Vision

Healthy Food Healthy People began with a simple vision of having Niagara Falls residents understand the value of, be able to, and choose to eat healthy foods. Through the work done over the past several years with local leaders and institutions, it became clear that a cohesive plan of action for food access issues in Niagara Falls was needed. The plan that has been formed through much resident input and feedback represents an evolving vision to address food access issues in an effective and meaningful way. Within this plan, each priority area reflects the concerns of the Niagara Falls community. The vision is: within each of the four priority areas, residents and organizations will be able to take on what is meaningful to them and tackle that issue with the support of HFHP and the City of Niagara Falls.

In practice, the Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan will be a roadmap for improving the entire food system, from production to consumption, in the city of Niagara Falls. Recommendations may be taken up by organizations or individuals, and will be supported by HFHP. Advocacy for many of the plan’s recommendations will be needed, however.

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Want to learn more? See Appendix B: Understanding Food Systems



# The Framework of the Plan

This section of the plan should be considered the most important and most useful. The information presented within it comes directly from all of the data collected through surveys, focus groups, research and several months’ worth of sorting, ranking and revising.

The framework of the plan is organized into the following **FOUR PRIORITY AREAS**:

- A. Agriculture**
- B. Healthy Neighborhoods**
- C. Education**
- D. Economic Development**

Each of the four priority areas has **SUB-THEMES** with their own goal statements that help define the desired outcomes for the theme. The sub-themes are:

<i>Agriculture</i>	<i>Healthy Neighborhoods</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Economic Development</i>
<i>Urban Agriculture</i>	<i>Access</i>	<i>Consumer Education</i>	<i>Economic Development</i>
<i>Community Gardens</i>	<i>Civic Engagement</i>	<i>Schools</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
<i>Farmers Markets</i>			<i>Workforce Development</i>

The goal statements for each sub-theme are then supported by **PROPOSED ACTIONS** that demonstrate clear and tangible steps that can be taken to realize the goal of an improved food system in the City of Niagara Falls.

Each sub-theme also includes a section called **PROMISING PRACTICES** that highlights models, programs, projects or organizations that align with the proposed actions. These models could be on a local or regional level or could represent a national or international practice that could be replicated and modified in Niagara Falls.



# Agriculture

## 1. Urban Agriculture

In simple terms, urban agriculture is growing or producing food in a city. Niagara County is home to 760 farms. Many people tend to think that the concept of agriculture (the practice or work of farming) in cities is new and innovative, yet it has been the norm since farming and agriculture became a thing centuries ago. It wasn't until recently—within the past 100 years or so—that other trends began to emerge, due to, in large part: an increase in industrial-scale

agriculture, synthetic fertilization, and fossil fuel-powered transportation options. The trends are now reversing as people become more interested in and passionate about food buzzwords like: locally grown, organic, GMO-free, grass-fed and cage-free or free-range. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), around 15% of the world's food is now grown in urban areas (04/28/2017). For the purposes of this plan, urban agriculture is focused on commercial or large-scale food production within an urban setting.

### *Goal Statement*

Urban agriculture in Niagara Falls is a source of food access, employment, and viable markets.

### *Proposed Actions*

1. Create policies that promote and support urban agriculture opportunities in the city.
2. Create policies that incentivize alternative growing practices and provide supporting education to foster sustainable development (e.g., aquaponics, hydroponics, hoop houses, etc.).
3. Develop favorable market garden policies to allow residents and business owners to sell what they grow.
4. Engage community anchors (e.g., churches and other institutions) in planning and implementing urban agriculture programs.
5. Develop and promote programs that support the use of innovative technology in urban agriculture.
6. Develop a Farmer Mentor program between rural and urban growers.
7. Promote workforce development agriculture programs for high school youth (e.g., Future Farmers of America and Urban 4-H).
8. Develop an urban agriculture entrepreneurship program that prepares professionals for sustainable business opportunities.
9. Create summer agriculture camps for youth—integrate working in gardens and other forms of urban agriculture.

*Aquaponics: The symbiotic cultivation of plants and aquatic animals in a recirculating environment.*

*Hydroponics: The cultivation of plants in a nutrient solution rather than soil.*

*Hoop Houses: Temporary or permanent structures typically made of piping and covered with translucent material for the purpose of growing food or ornamental crops.*

*Crop Rotation: A method of farming where a number of different plants are grown one after the other on a field so that the soil stays healthy and fertile.*

*Integrated Pest Management: An approach to pest control that focuses on prevention by eliminating the root causes of pest problems.*

*Cover Cropping: A crop of a specific plant that is grown primarily for the benefit of the soil rather than the crop yield; commonly used to suppress weeds, manage soil erosion, help build and improve soil fertility and quality, and control diseases and pests.*



### **Promising Practices**

#### **Project EATS –Brooklyn, N.Y. (pictured above)**

Project EATS is a New York City based program—in the Brownsville neighborhood—that collaborates with residents, schools and local organizations to transform underused lots in working class and low income communities into sustainable, chemical free, neighborhood farms. They activate urban nature, strengthen neighborhood-based economies, and increase the quality of learning and skills individuals and families can access in their communities.

*Website:* [www.projecteats.org](http://www.projecteats.org)

*Social Media:* Facebook.com/projecteatsnyc  
Instagram: @projecteats  
Twitter: @ProjectEATS

#### **Groundwork Market Garden - Buffalo, N.Y.**

Groundwork Market Garden is an urban farm located on the East Side of Buffalo, NY. Utilizing methods such as crop rotation, integrated pest management, cover cropping, soil testing and remediation, they aim to create the best possible growing environment for their crops. They strive to provide only the highest quality, most nutritious fruits and veggies, and to rebuild the ties between farmer and consumer, so there can be trust and honesty in food systems.

*Website:* [www.groundworkmg.com](http://www.groundworkmg.com)

*Social Media:* Facebook.com/groundworkmg  
Instagram: @gwmgbflo

## 2. Community Gardens

Whereas urban agriculture focuses on commercial-scale production of food, community gardens (usually single plots of land gardened by a community of people for the cultivation of food or flowers) are typically geared more toward neighborhood food access and less toward the financial/profit-making aspect of farming. Community gardens provide a small-scale, low-cost source of food to a specifically-identified neighborhood, whereas urban farms, as a practice, require larger investments of time and money.



### ***Goal Statement***

Community gardens serve as spaces for social, physical and environmental transformation.

### ***Proposed Actions***

1. Develop policies at the city level that promote and support community gardening opportunities.
2. Create policies at the city level that allow access to irrigation for community gardening on vacant lots.
3. Utilize community gardening as a tool to combat urban blight and zombie properties.
4. Promote awareness about the link between community gardening and safer neighborhoods.
5. Create a database of potential garden spaces across the city.
6. Create phytoremediation programs to address soil contamination and urban blight.
7. Create a community gardening network across the city.

### ***Promising Practice***

#### **Grassroots Gardens of WNY – Buffalo, N.Y.**

Grassroots Gardens of WNY is a determined group of activists who educate and lead committed neighborhood gardeners. The organization collaboratively cultivates and manages more than 300,000 square feet of green space in Buffalo and Niagara Falls. Their work is rooted in the belief that a garden has the power to transform an urban neighborhood; deliver beauty and escape; produce healthy food in unexpected places that previously had little value; and create a shared sense of purpose that empowers a community, creates environmental awareness and improves public health.

*Website:* [www.grassrootsgardens.org](http://www.grassrootsgardens.org)

*Social Media:* [Facebook.com/grassrootsgardens](https://www.facebook.com/grassrootsgardens)

Instagram: @ggwny

Twitter: @ggwny

### 3. Farmers Markets

A farmers market typically operates multiple times per year, or on a more regular basis, and is organized to create personal connections that provide benefits for local farmers, consumers and communities. To do so, farmers markets define and live by the term “local,” they regularly communicate that definition to the public, and they implement rules and guidelines of operation to make sure that farmers markets consist mostly of farms that are selling products that they produced to the public. Currently, the City of Niagara Falls is host to only one permanent, year-round farmers market: City Market on Pine Avenue.



#### ***Goal Statement***

Farmers markets thrive as a viable part of the community food system.

#### ***Proposed Actions***

1. Promote and support farmers markets by creating policies at the city level that favor the development of farmers markets across the city—including indoor opportunities.
2. Improve market operations at the Niagara Falls City Market to include more market oversight and management, federal and state funded nutrition incentive programs such as Double Up Food Bucks, WIC, Farmers Market Nutrition Program and SNAP.

#### ***Promising Practices***

##### **Double Up Food Bucks – Buffalo, N.Y.**

Field & Fork Network’s Double Up Food Bucks doubles the value of federal nutrition assistance dollars spent at participating farmers markets and mobile markets, helping people bring home more locally grown fruits and vegetables. The wins are three-fold: low-income consumers eat more healthy foods; local farmers gain new customers and make more money; and more food dollars stay in the local economy.

*Website:* [www.doubleupnys.com](http://www.doubleupnys.com)

*Social Media:* Facebook.com/fieldandforknetwork  
Twitter: @FieldandForkWNY







## Healthy Neighborhoods

### 1. Access

Access relates to a concept known as “food security” which can be described as, “all people, at all times, having physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization). The USDA simplifies this definition and defines food security as, “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.”

Related to food security is the term “food deserts” which describe a physical location that has limited access to healthy foods and are often found in low-income neighborhoods. In fact, a large portion of the City of Niagara Falls can be considered a food desert as only one true grocery store (Tops, Portage Road) exists within city limits.

#### ***Goal Statement***

Residents have the ability to procure, cook, and store food in a safe and healthy way.

#### ***Proposed Actions***

1. Establish community kitchens in low-income neighborhoods.
2. Coordinate programs that provide equipment, supplies, and utensils for home cooking.
3. Advocate for improved physical conditions (e.g., sidewalk reconstruction, lighting, bike lanes) for pedestrians and bicyclists.
4. Identify corner stores that would be appropriate for a “Healthy Corner Store Initiative” pilot program.

#### ***Promising Practices***

##### **Healthy Corner Stores Network – United States**

The national Healthy Corner Stores Network, originally founded by The Food Trust and partners, started with the goal of supporting efforts to increase the availability of healthy, affordable foods through small stores in underserved communities across the country. The Network connects community members, nonprofits, local governments, funders and other advocates to share information, resources and best practices on the latest strategies for healthy food retail in small stores.

*Website:* [www.thefoodtrust.org](http://www.thefoodtrust.org)

*Social Media:* Facebook.com/thefoodtrust  
Instagram: @thefoodtrust  
Twitter: @thefoodtrust



## **Brownsville Community Culinary Center (BCCC) – Brooklyn, N.Y.**

The BCCC brings world-class culinary resources to the Brownsville neighborhood, which includes: a 40-week culinary training program, table-service eatery, café, bakery, and community gathering space. Through the program, residents gain access to: delicious, healthy and affordable foods; job training opportunities; and a forum to address and organize around community-related issues.

*Website:* [www.meltingpotfoundationusa.org](http://www.meltingpotfoundationusa.org)

*Social Media:* [Facebook.com/BrownsvilleCCC](https://www.facebook.com/BrownsvilleCCC)  
Instagram: @brownsvilleccc

## **2. Civic Engagement**

To be “civically engaged” would mean you are actively working to make a difference in the civic (town or city) life of your community. This could include political activism, environmentalism, community/national service, volunteering or service learning. According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, 19.2% of New York State residents volunteered in 2015, which ranks 49th among the 50 states and Washington, DC, while 61% engage in “informal volunteering” which could include something as simple as doing something for a neighbor. Both are examples of civic engagement, but there is certainly room for improvement, and plenty of food-related engagement opportunities exist.

### ***Goal Statement***

Niagara Falls is a place where citizens are engaged in environmental health and economic issues.

### ***Proposed Actions***

1. Residents advocate to the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority for changes in routes, safer drop-off locations, and improved policies (e.g., cart policy)
2. Activate citizen advocacy surrounding grocery stores and food retail to keep prices fairly distributed
3. Organize residents behind healthy food policies and programs, including clean air, soil, and water causes.

### ***Promising Practices***

## **Buffalo Transit Riders United (BTRU) – Buffalo, N.Y.**

BTRU is a collective of transit riders working for a more efficient, equitable and responsive transit system in the greater Buffalo/Niagara area. As a part of the Coalition for Economic Justice, BTRU works with community leaders to hold the NFTA and government officials accountable through united community efforts.

*Website:* [www.cejbuffalo.org](http://www.cejbuffalo.org)

*Social Media:* [Facebook.com/BuffaloTransitRidersUnited](https://www.facebook.com/BuffaloTransitRidersUnited)





## Education

### 1. Consumer Education

Education is key to any initiative, and the same is true for the Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan. For the purposes of this plan, the consumer is any individual who purchases food-related goods or services. Consumer education will expand upon local offerings for educating residents about a variety of healthy food-related topics.

#### *Goal Statement*

Residents are aware and take advantage of: local agriculture, healthy cooking techniques, and educational opportunities about healthy eating.

#### *Proposed Actions*

1. Provide culturally relevant education opportunities about the economic and health benefits of eating local (e.g., “Local Food Day,” book clubs, movie screenings).
2. Teach residents creative ways to garden without traditional plots or raised beds (e.g., utilizing planters, aluminum gutters, or plastic buckets), with an emphasis on engaging senior citizens and youth in a multigenerational approach to learning.
3. Create and promote a city-wide residential composting program.



#### *Promising Practices*

##### **Local Food Day – Viroqua, Wisc.**

Local Food Day is a celebration of local food and community. The goal is to bring together local communities for a day of education and fun all revolving around the goodness of local food. The one-day event is held in a warehouse and includes informational sessions, panels of experts, film screenings and discussions, food demonstrations, social mixers, farmers market and other vendor booths, youth activities, live music and more.

*Website:* [www.localfoodday.com](http://www.localfoodday.com)

*Social Media:* [Facebook.com/localfoodday](https://www.facebook.com/localfoodday)

## 2. Schools

To improve access to local foods in schools, the USDA began a comprehensive effort to connect small farms to school meal programs in 1997 which led to the creation of the Farm to School Grant Program to support planning and implementation. The program also provides training and technical assistance in addition to sharing research and data on existing programs. In the fall of 2015, the Niagara Falls City School District received a \$45,000 USDA Farm to School grant to enable the district to develop relationships with local producers, create a plan to integrate local products into district curricula, and develop a student-driven marketing plan to encourage the roughly 6,700 enrolled students to consume more local products.

### *Goal Statement*

Niagara Falls City School District's Farm to School planning effort is supported by the community. This plan will be constructed to include policy and program recommendations that other schools in the city of Niagara Falls can adopt and implement.

### *Proposed Actions*

1. Adopt a local school garden program with the capability of harvesting for school lunches and partnering with youth organizations to help maintain the gardens.
2. Improve quality, nutrition, and aesthetic of school lunches to promote healthy eating among youth.
3. Integrate agriculture education into school curricula and other youth programming.
4. Activate student voices in helping determine the district's food selection through many opportunities for feedback and presentations of results to local stakeholders.
5. Target youth with early interventions about the importance of a varied and healthy diet, including health effects.

### *Promising Practices*

#### **Farm to School Plan – Niagara Falls, N.Y.**

The Niagara Falls City School District developed an actionable Farm to School Plan for the district. The plan focuses on three areas: procurement of local foods to be used in meals served in the cafeteria with an emphasis on Harvest of the Month items featuring produce that is in-season; school gardens positioned as live learning laboratories at each school in the district; and integrating existing curriculum with agricultural concepts that can be demonstrated in the school gardens.

*Website:* [www.nfschools.net](http://www.nfschools.net)



# Economic Development

## 1. Economic Development

Food is an important component of the economy at every level, and every city has an existing food cluster, even if it only consists of the local grocery store. That means that every city can – and should – consider food as part of its economic development strategy. In most cities, the food cluster includes large institutional purchasers like hospitals, schools, and cultural venues; restaurants; and food processing and distribution

businesses. These clusters are an important source of jobs, particularly for individuals without much education – around 60% of food industry workers have a high school diploma or less.

### *Goal Statement*

Companies take steps that positively impact the Niagara Falls food system.

### *Proposed Actions*

1. Craft a local food purchasing policy to be included by economic development agencies—at the city and state levels—in community benefits agreements with hotels and restaurants that receive public subsidies.
2. Expand promotion of agritourism in and around Niagara Falls.

### *Promising Practices*

#### **Albany County Local Food Purchasing Policy – Albany, N.Y.**

In 2009, the Albany County Legislature unanimously passed a resolution tasking the Albany County Purchasing Agent to consult with the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets to set a percentage of foods that qualify as “locally produced” for foods purchased by county residential healthcare and correctional facilities.

*Website:* [www.albanycounty.com](http://www.albanycounty.com)



## 2. Infrastructure

Urban infrastructure relates to the systems that are vital to the basic functions of a city, such as energy, transportation, water, waste management and telecommunications. Food systems are becoming a new, yet critical, component of urban infrastructures—with the basic idea being that the production and distribution of food are components of urban infrastructure similar to systems of power, water and information. Community gardens, for example, not only provide food for urban residents, but serve as stormwater management systems that allow water and waste to be recycled on a very small scale.

### *Goal Statement*

Improve urban agriculture prospects in Niagara Falls.

### *Proposed Actions*

1. Engage the City of Niagara Falls Planning Department to identify policy changes that can be instituted to give urban farms and community gardens longer-term agreements to cultivate city owned land.
2. Work with the Niagara Falls City Council on a market garden ordinance that allows residents to sell produce that has been harvested, safely and sustainably, from private or community gardens.
3. Identify strategic nodes around the city for mobile market visits and temporary pop-up markets.

### *Promising Practices*

#### **Detroit Urban Agriculture Ordinance – Detroit, Mich.**

The ordinance establishes legal definitions for various types of urban agriculture uses, including aquaculture, aquaponics, farm stands, farmer’s markets, greenhouses, rainwater catchment systems, hoopouses, orchards, tree farms, urban farms and urban gardens. The ordinance operates as an overlay to the city’s existing zoning ordinance, specifying the zoning classifications allowing urban agriculture by right or conditional use.

*Website:* [www.detroitagriculture.net](http://www.detroitagriculture.net)

*Social Media:* [Facebook.com/keepdetroitgrowing](https://www.facebook.com/keepdetroitgrowing)

## 3. Workforce Development

A competitive workforce is critical to establishing sustainable futures for cities and is, at the same time, one of the most pressing challenges. For many individuals, finding the right career path might not come easy, which is why it is important, particularly as local economies continue to evolve away from manufacturing, to provide diverse collections of workforce development and training programs. Great opportunities exist in the food space to provide a variety of training programs, particularly in a tourism-based city like Niagara Falls, NY.



## ***Goal Statement***

Residents of Niagara Falls, particularly youth, participate in urban farming.

## ***Proposed Actions***

1. Develop food-based employment and training opportunities in food desert areas of the City of Niagara Falls.
2. As urban farms come online, initiate a youth oriented pilot program to teach cultivation techniques, economics, entrepreneurship, and provide summer employment.
3. Bring Niagara Falls youth together with the city's senior citizens to share knowledge and form a mutually beneficial, intergenerational partnership.

## ***Promising Practices***

### **YOU Made It Café – London, Ontario**

The YOU Made It Café is a social enterprise operated as an employment skills program for youth who face barriers due to homelessness, unemployment and lack of education. Youth employed in the café benefit from a thorough skills training program under the mentorship of professional staff. Youth employed by the program also make a line of products called Market Quality Preserves, which includes jams, jellies, spreads, salsas and barbeque sauces.

*Website:* [www.youmadeitcafe.ca](http://www.youmadeitcafe.ca)

*Social Media:* Facebook.com/YOUMadeItCafeLondon  
Instagram: @youmadeitcafe  
Twitter: @YMICafe

### **Green City Force – New York City, N.Y.**

Green City Force (GCF) engages young NYC Housing Authority residents in rigorous training and service as AmeriCorps members. GCF members are young adults who hold a high school diploma or equivalency but test, on average, at a 9th grade level. At GCF, they serve full-time on teams, gaining work experience in the field four days a week on projects related to energy efficiency, urban agriculture, and sustainability. They acquire academic and technical skills in the classroom every Friday as they work toward technical certifications and success on college exams.

*Website:* [www.greencityforce.org](http://www.greencityforce.org)

*Social Media:* Facebook.com/greencityforce  
Instagram: @greencityforce  
Twitter: @greencityforce



## The Future of the Plan and Sustainable Success

Although the City of Niagara Falls has seen many signs of economic revitalization over the course of the last decade, improving food security and access for residents remains paramount. The Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan provides the tools to alleviate the challenges facing the city's food system. Its effectiveness will be determined by its implementation and buy-in from the groups that are involved in food access both directly and indirectly. The plan must be driven by four key constituencies: residents, government and elected officials, large public and private institutions, and service providers.

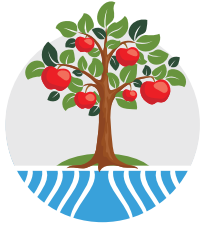
The residents of Niagara Falls are the most crucial of these groups as only they can effectively address their needs and hold policymakers accountable. Although Healthy Food Healthy People will provide guidance, support and technical assistance, the Resident Engagement Council (REC) will provide leadership for the implementation of the plan. Members of the REC have had regular involvement in the planning process to ensure that the plan can move forward seamlessly.

Several Niagara Falls departments, including Community Development, Planning and Public works, and the City's elected officials, will play a vital role in the future of the plan as well. Changes in existing food policy, as well as the introduction of new policy, will be enacted by these departments after adoption by the mayor and the city council.



Large institutions in Niagara Falls, such as Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, Niagara Falls Culinary Institute and the Niagara Falls City School District, exercise an immense amount of influence over the food system in the city based on their purchasing. Many of these institutions have already embarked on initiatives that have positively impacted the availability of healthy, local food in Niagara Falls. Further collaboration between these and other institutions, residents and service providers will be necessary to achieve many of the goals laid out in the Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan. Ultimately, the success of this plan will be driven by the participation and cooperation of these stakeholders and many others, including farmers, business owners, tourism professionals and local universities.





# Acknowledgements

The Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan would not have been possible without the contributions, support and commitment provided by hundreds of Niagara Falls residents and organizations who participated in the planning process.

Particular acknowledgement is due the New York State Health Foundation (<https://nyshealthfoundation.org>) for providing Technical Assistance support to the production of the plan.

The Action Plan is the result of a strong collaborative effort by a dedicated group of many. Our heartfelt thanks go to:

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\* *Members of the Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan Steering Committee*

A special thanks to Mayor Paul A. Dyster and his staff for their support throughout the process.

**Plan prepared by:** Healthy Food Healthy People work group

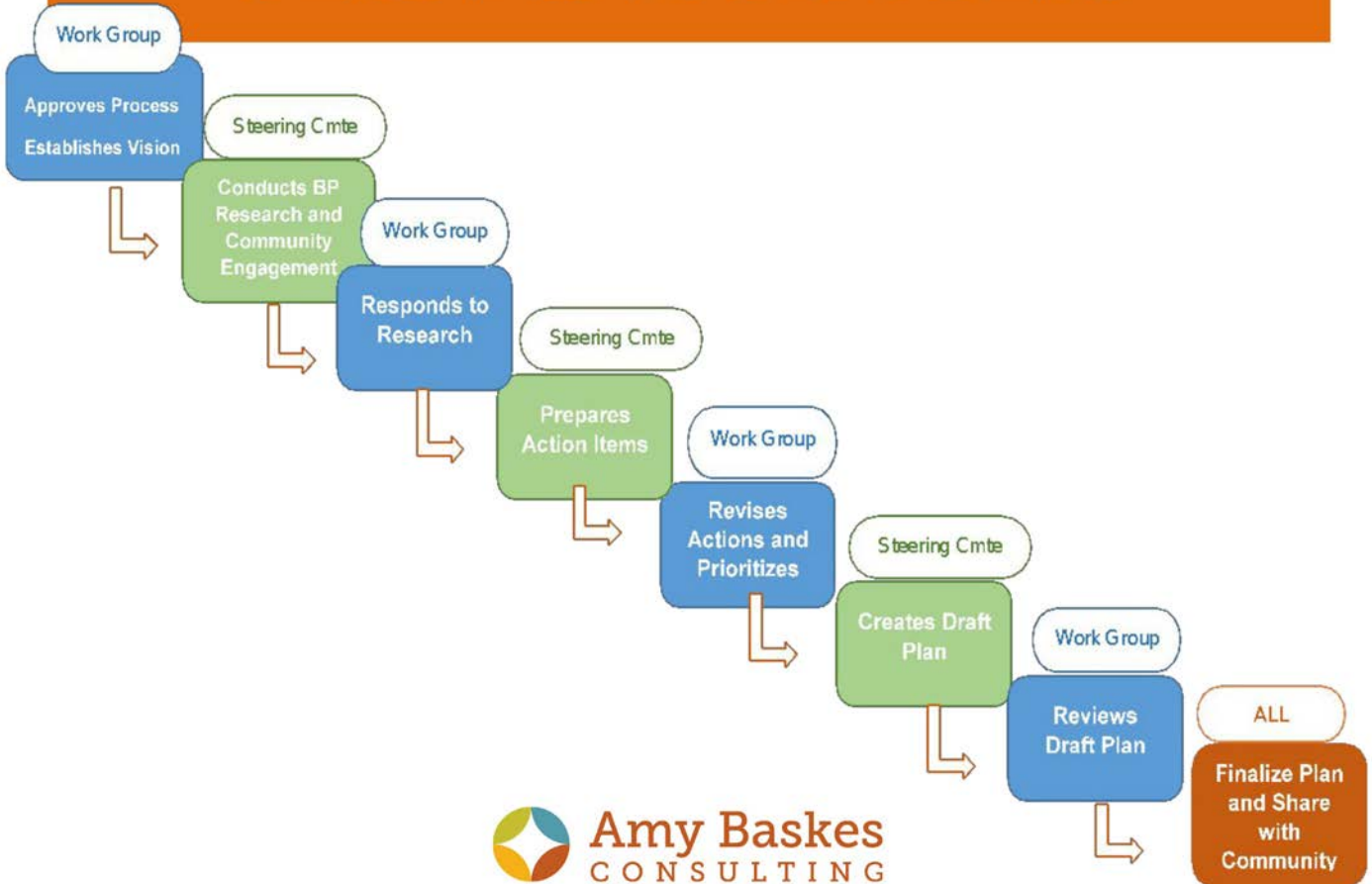
**Plan designed by:** Lisa McMahon

**Logo designed by:** Lisa Meis



# Appendix A

## PLANNING PROCESS





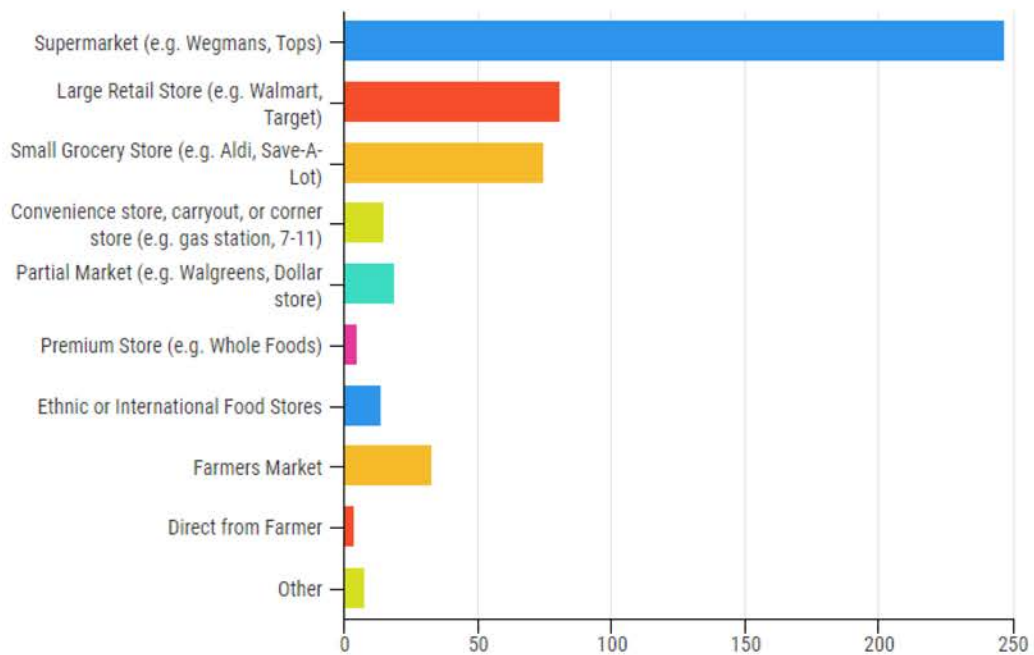
# Appendix B



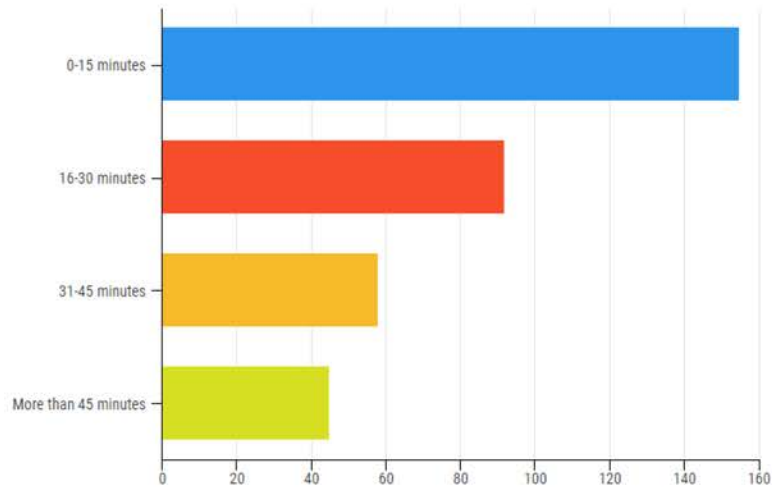
Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan  
**Consumer Survey**

## 349 Total Responses

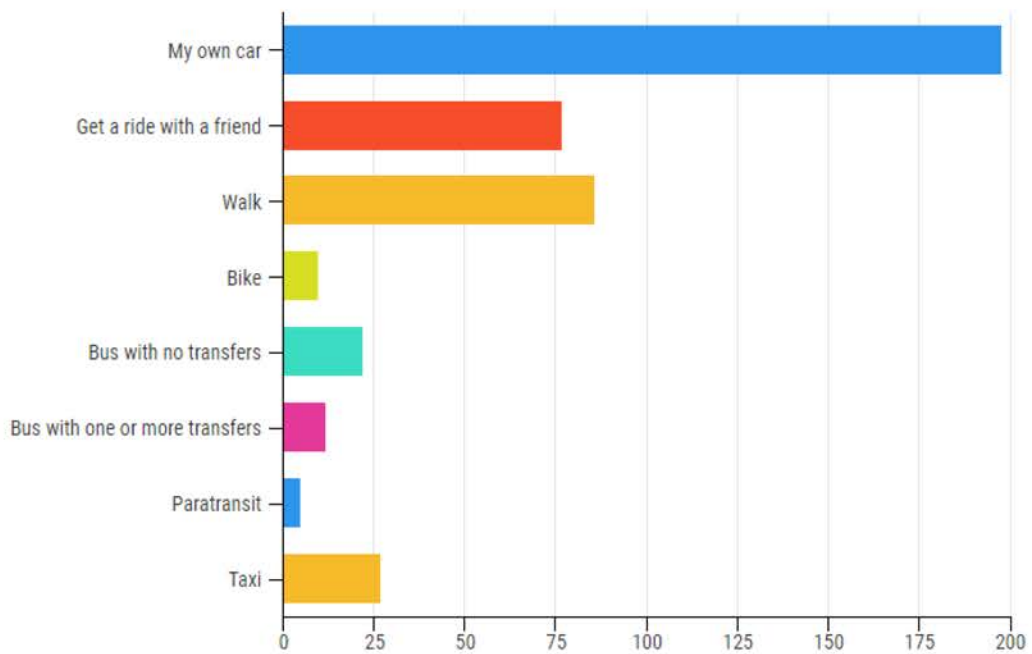
Q1: Where do you buy most of your food? (select all that apply)



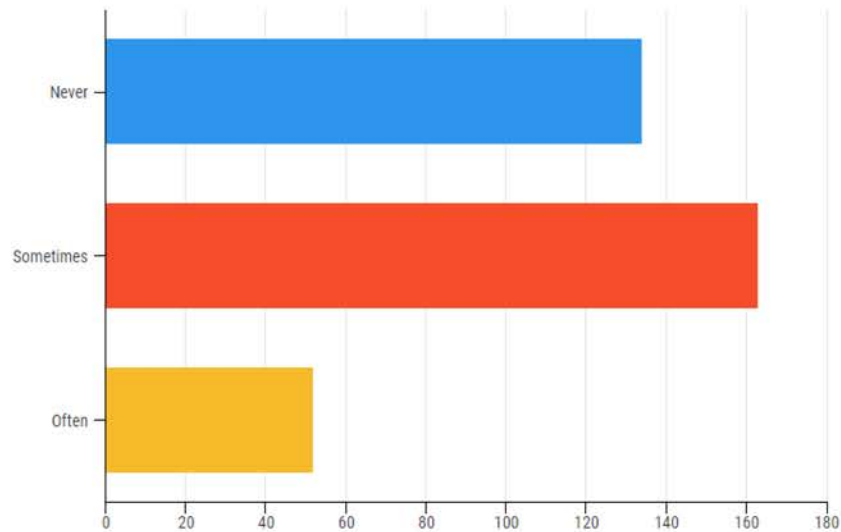
Q2: On average, how long does it take to get where you buy most of your food?



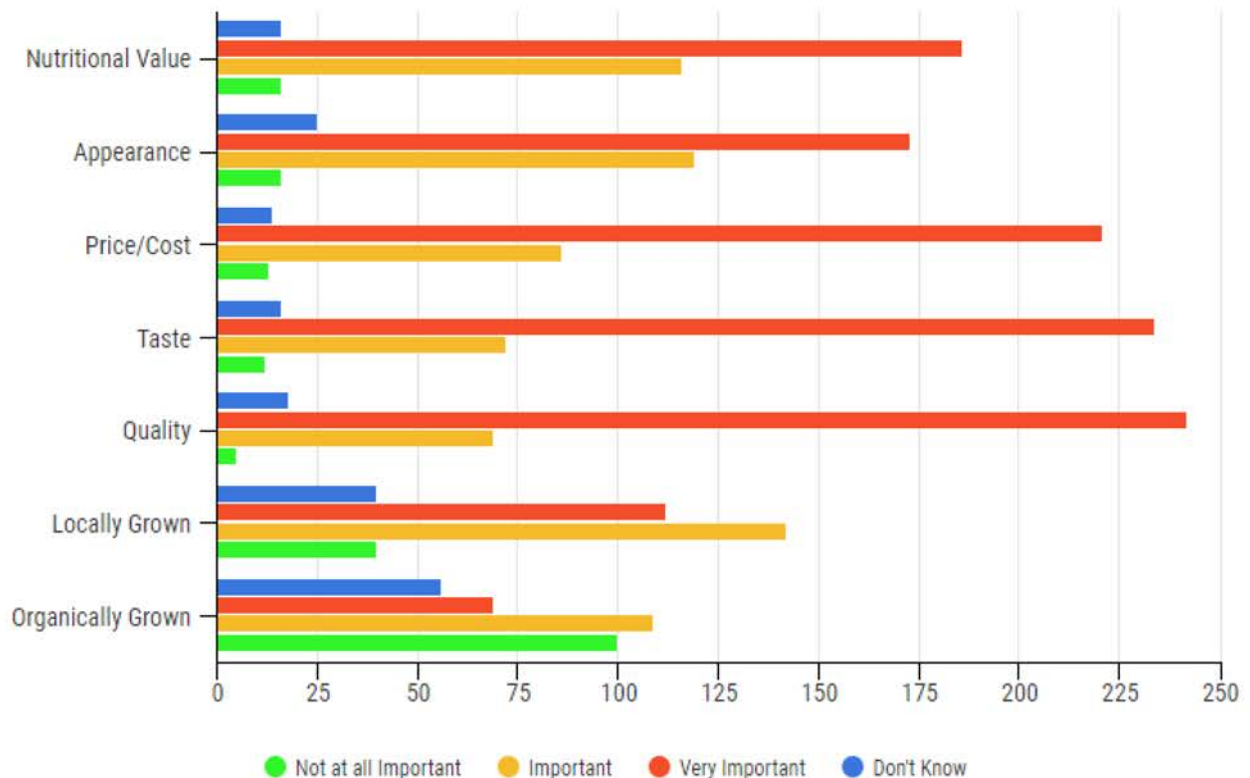
Q3: How do you usually get to the location where you buy most of your food? (select all that apply)



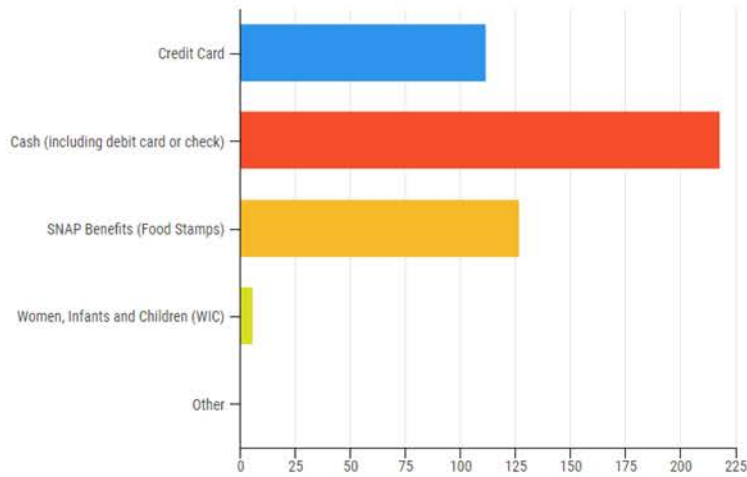
Q4: Within the past 12 months, how often would you say that the food you bought just didn't last and you didn't have money to get more?



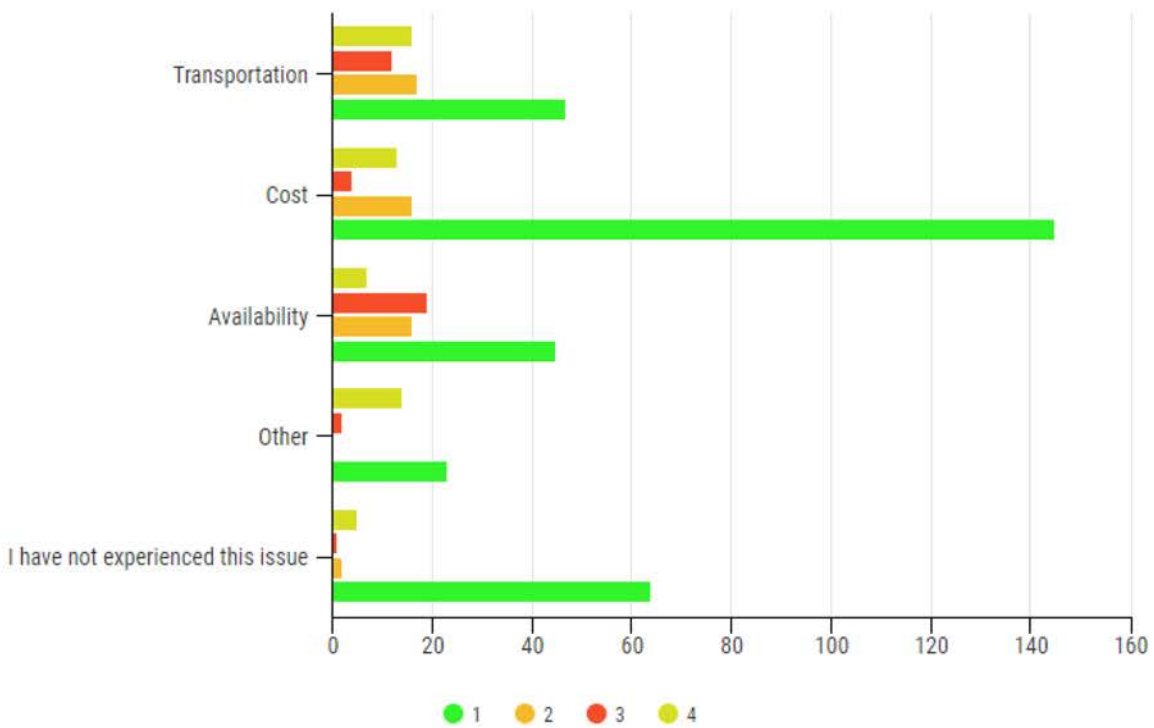
Q5: Please rate how important the following items are factors in your decisions about what food to buy. (check all that apply)



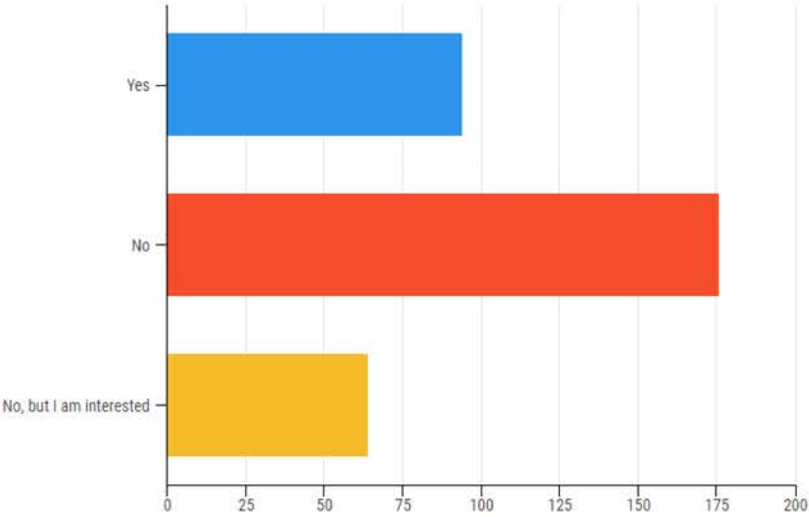
Q6. Which of the following ways do you usually pay for your food (excluding food from restaurants)? (select all that apply)



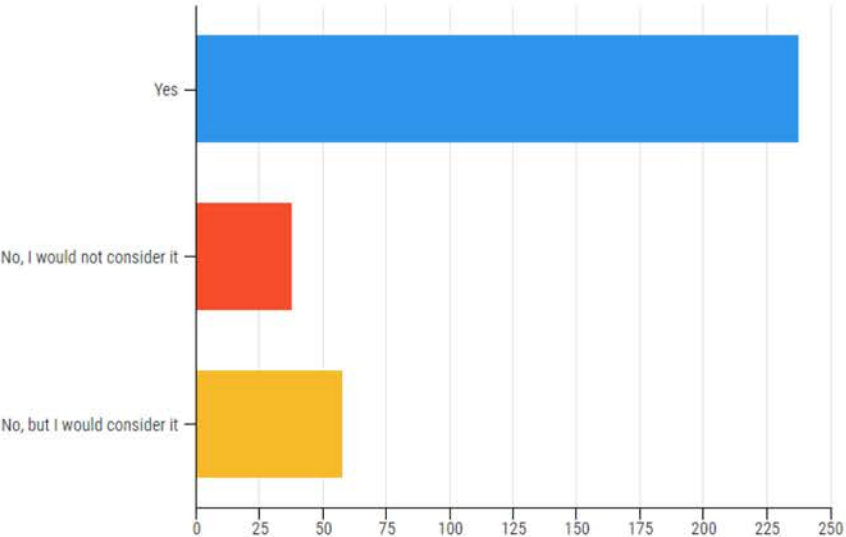
Q7: What are the biggest barriers that you face to eating healthy? (rating)



Q8: Do you grow any of your own food or are you interested in growing any of your own food?



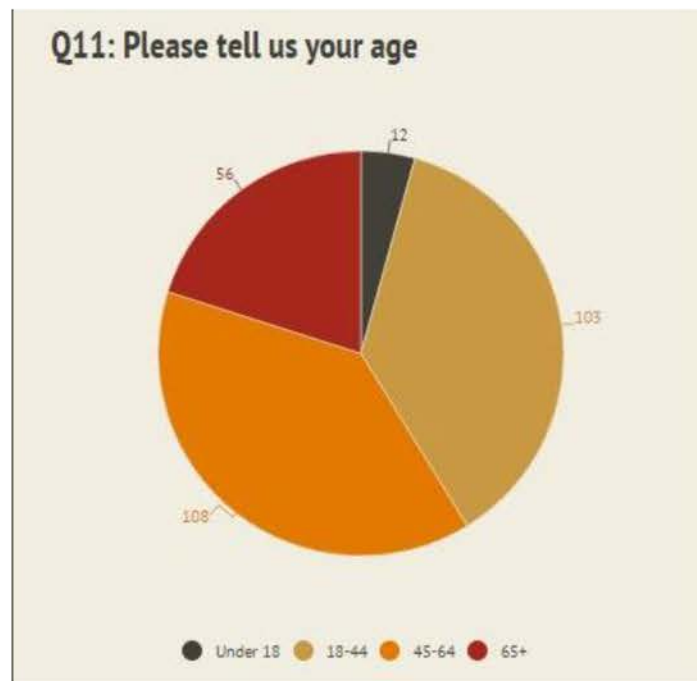
Q9: Have you ever eaten food grown by someone in the community?



Q10: What do you feel is the biggest food-related need in your neighborhood?

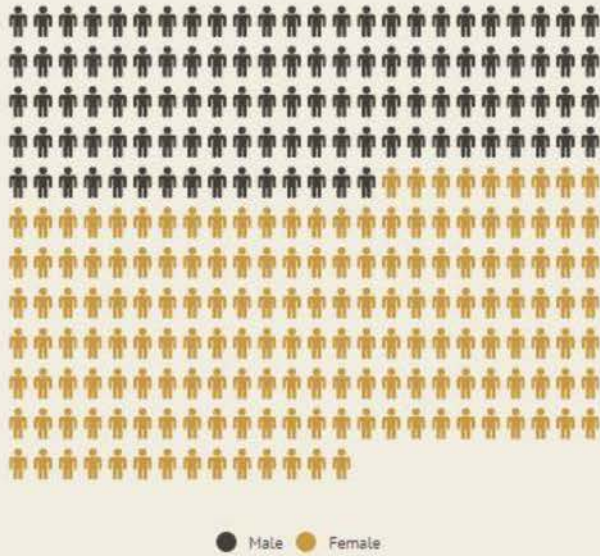


Demographic Information:

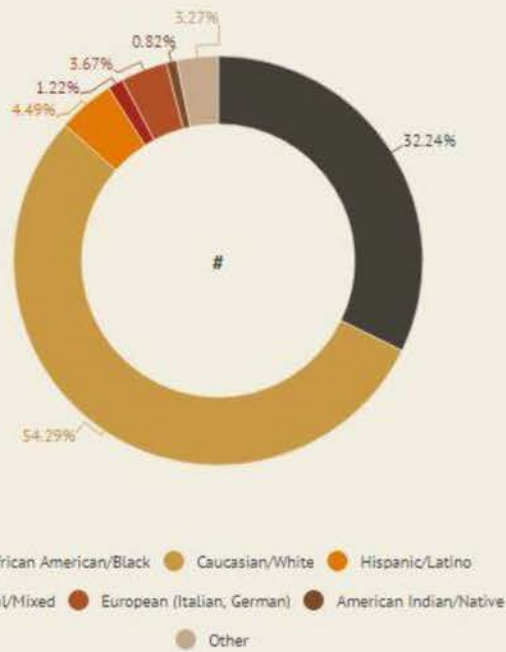




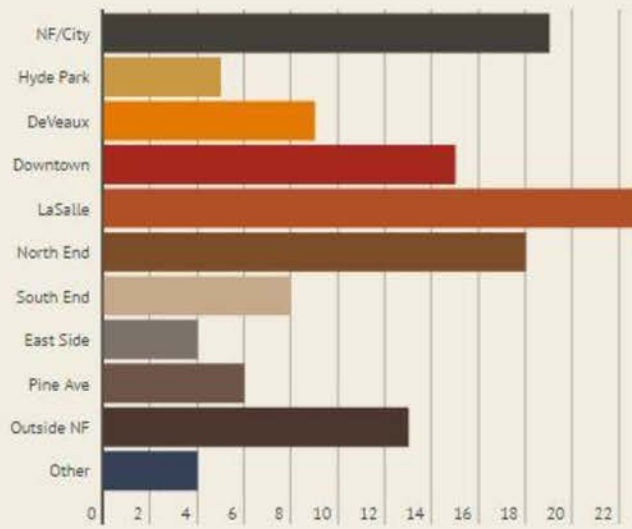
### Q12: Please tell us your gender



### Q13: Please tell us your ethnicity



### Q14: Please tell us the neighborhood you live in



### Q15: Please tell us your total household income level



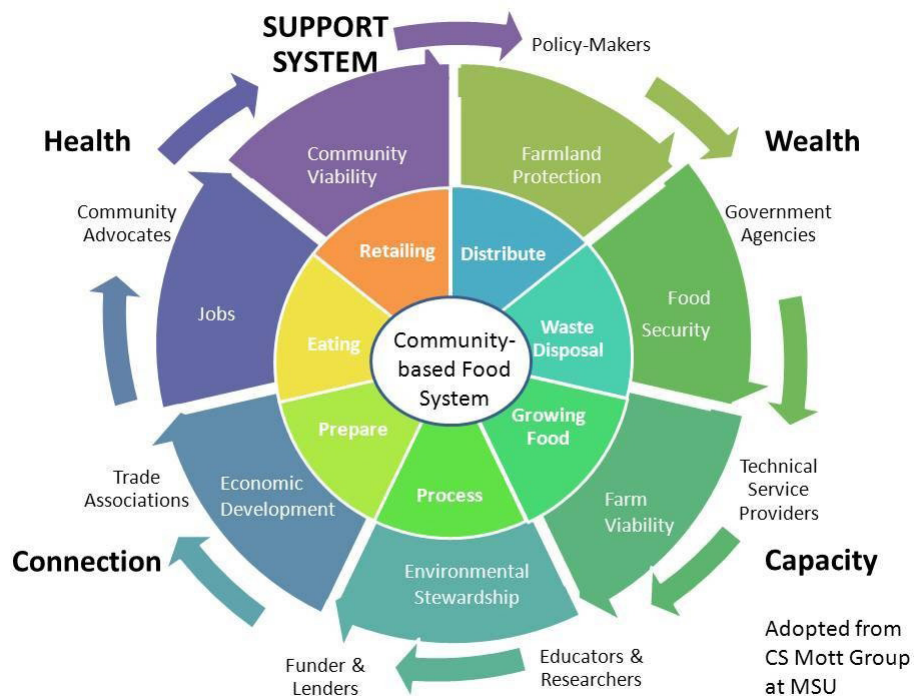


# Appendix C

## Understanding Food Systems

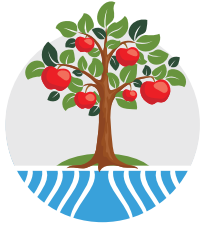
Food systems are complex. Historically, cities were considered favorable spaces for food production, but with industrialization and modernization, this concept has been seriously compromised. The City of Niagara Falls is no exception and it no longer reflects its food supply system. Niagara Falls is part of a larger collaborative network—or food system—integrating food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management in an effort to enhance the resiliency of local and regional food supply chains. Consideration of the Niagara Falls “foodshed” facilitates discussion concerning where our food comes from and how it is getting to us. While the farm to fork concept is gaining popularity, especially through the rise of direct-to-consumer markets such as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), farm shares and farmer’s markets, we are, in fact, members of a larger, global food system that is dependent on far-reaching food supply chains.

Shaped by economic, transport, and distribution mechanisms, a “foodshed” is considered the flow of food supply to a particular location. Unlike a watershed, where all water flows in one direction (downstream), in a foodshed, crops or agricultural products cross paths. The connection of food to its source, the farm, is integral to understanding the connection of the foodshed to the local food system. The Great Lakes are home to the largest freshwater system on Earth, and the Niagara River acts as a connecting channel for both Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, two of the five Great Lakes. Geography in the Niagara Region lends to international trade relationships with our neighbor, Canada, and illustrates the global tenets inherent in the local food system in Niagara Falls. Agricultural policy is now heavily influenced by global markets, and agriculture has become disconnected from urban policymaking. While technological advances and connectivity afford us access to a globally influenced food system, it wreaks havoc on both natural and social communities, locally, by handcuffing regional development and fair pricing for farmers/producers.



Reducing dependency on distant food supply chains and increasing urban growing opportunities is supportive of a more resilient local food system that can otherwise experience disruptions, such as economic or climatic influencers. Bolstering local supply chains is meant to enhance environmental, economic, and social health aspects of the Niagara region and is essential to a robust food system. But the looming question facing the Niagara Falls network remains: What is hindering the advancement of efforts to promote the local food system?

One explanation could be the major gaps in cultural infrastructure were identified during the early work of HFHP. Permeating the dialogue of Niagara Falls residents, community organizations, businesses, and local officials, alike, is a growing body of robust research and information surrounding food systems and their relationship to the health and well-being of individuals, communities, and regions. The concept of “food as medicine” has grown in popularity and has become embedded in the language of public health and food system advocates. These initial conversations laid the groundwork for the development of the Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan.



# Appendix D

## Full List of Actions (Consolidated)

Creating A Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative  
 Healthy Food Healthy People Work Group  
 LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN - PROPOSED ACTIONS

PRIMARY	SUB CATEGORY	PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS
1 AG	Logistics	Redevelop local infrastructure to encourage local processing
2 AG	Logistics	Collective/central distribution points
3 AG	Logistics	Fresh Food Financing Initiative/Healthy Food Financing Initiative
4 AG	Markets	Reduce overhead expenses for farmers/vendors at Niagara Falls City Market.
5 AG	Markets	Lower the rent of vendor stalls at NF City Market.
6 AG	Markets	Reduced liability costs for producers to distribute to grocery stores
7 AG	Markets	Consistency in product across stores, along with higher quality produce offerings at the Portage Road site were discussed.
8 AG	Production	Higher quality and more available greenhouse produce
9 AG	Production	More organically grown food
10 AG	Production	a large greenhouse
11 AG	Production	Businesses being in partnerships with farms instead of buyer-client
12 AG	Production	Freshly made breads and other secondary products
13 AG	Promote Local Foods	Increased support of local farmers and CSA model.
14 AG	Promote Local Foods	Program to promote local agriculture and bolster local economic development
15 AG	Promote Local Foods	Youth-oriented CSA box program with recipes
16 AG	Promote Local Foods	Trial-period CSA
17 AG	Promote Local Foods	Hospital based CSA or "Farm to Work" program
18 AG	Promote Local Foods	"Ugly"/misshapen produce marketing in corner stores
19 AG	Promote Local Foods	Marketing/distribution assistance for producers (and social media/web support)
20 AG	Promote Local Foods	Ways to connect farmer to consumer without pulling farmers away from their work
21 AG	Promote Local Foods	Gleaning/Second Harvest/Ugly Produce Markets
22 AG	Promote Local Foods	Bus tours to agricultural attractions
23 AG	Promote Local Foods	Encourage local/state/federal to incentivize production/consumption of healthy foods
24 AG	Promote Local Foods	Sliding scale/income-based CSAs
25 AG	Promote Local Foods	Local government/local institutions procuring locally
26 AG	Promote Local Foods	flexible CSA membership terms- trial period, opt out for a month
27 AG	Promote Local Foods	Themed CSA offerings- salad, Italian, by family size
28 AG	Promote Local Foods	tap more into wine trail
29 AG	Promote Local Foods	Market ugly produce
30 AG	Promote Local Foods	Allow chef specialties to be the center of menu
31 AG	Promote Local Foods	Feature local foods in specials
32 AG	Promote Local Foods	Promote community staples
33 AG	Promote Local Foods	Make efforts visible to community, they want to see businesses are trying
34 AG	Promote Local Foods	Pairing local alcohols with healthy food events
35 AG	Promote Local Foods	Events (movies, concerts) that also promote healthy living
36 AG	Promote Local Foods	More healthy fresh food options during winter months
37 AG	Promote Local Foods	Make interesting food options that attract other people here, economy will improve and locals will follow
38 AG	Promote Local Foods	Increased access to cultural appropriate African foods for NF residents - Collard greens
39 AG	Promote Local Foods	Link local organizations (LiteracyNY) with Farming community
40 AG	Promote Local Foods	Advertisements about what local means
41 AG	Promote Local Foods	-Be proactive in reaching out to residents about convenient and affordable programs like subsidized CSAs
42 AG	Promote Local Foods	Better communication between local ag and distributors about crops (seasonality/quality)
43 AG	Promote Local Foods	Education about benefits of eating local
44 AG	Promote Local Foods	Kitchen table conversations
45 AG	Training	Succession planning for farmers
46 AG	Training	Re-evaluate prohibitive regulations (e.g. labor, pesticide, Clean Water Act, GAP, Good Food Purchasing Program, Food Safety Modernization Act)
47 AG	Training	Subsidized/structured programs for youth interns/employees on farms – tied to an institution
48 AG	Training	Farmer mentor program
49 AG	Training	Workforce development agriculture programs for high school youth
50 AG	Training	Programs that promote/educate on use of technology in growing
51 AG	Training	Urban 4H
52 AG	Training	Check and balance list of products that are fluctuating

DRAFT as of June 6, 2017

# Full List of Actions (Consolidated)

Creating A Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative  
 Healthy Food Healthy People Work Group  
 LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN - PROPOSED ACTIONS

PRIMARY	SUB CATEGORY	PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS
53 AG	Training	Change NYS policy that prohibits volunteer farm labor
54 AG	Training	Succession/transition planning assistance for aging farmers/family farms
55 AG	Urban Ag	Access to irrigation for community gardening (vacant lots).
56 AG	Urban Ag	Community gardening opportunities for NF population
57 AG	Urban Ag	Urban agriculture opportunities
58 AG	Urban Ag	Civic urban agricultural pursuits (learn by doing)
59 AG	Urban Ag	-Implement a City ordinance that allows struggling Niagara Falls residents to supplement income by selling locally grown produce (as long as it meets certain standards).
60 AG	Urban Ag	Structured incubator farms
61 AG	Urban Ag	Aquaponics programs
62 AG	Urban Ag	Market-garden policies
63 AG	Urban Ag	Rent plots of land out
64 AG	Urban Ag	Community gardening stewardship program
65 AG	Urban Ag	Development of productive lots (gardening) and developing a matrix throughout the city of NF
66 AG	Urban Ag	-Utilize community gardening as a tool for the City of Niagara Falls to combat neighborhood blight and zombie properties.
67 AG	Urban Ag	-Emphasize the link between community gardening and safer neighborhoods in order to encourage resident buy-in.
68 AG	Urban Ag	-Work with landlords to limit barriers that discourage tenants from starting gardens on rental properties.
69 AG	Urban Ag	-Make sure that the City policies governing community gardens reflect the seasonal nature of agriculture in Western New York.
70 AG	Urban Ag	-Ensure that neighborhood residents are involved and consulted about community gardens in their neighborhoods to encourage a sense of ownership and discourage vandalism.
71 AG	Urban Ag	-Provide opportunities for Niagara Falls youth to work with senior citizens on community gardening programs, and facilitate intergenerational sharing of valuable agriculture knowledge.
72 AG	Urban Ag	-Engage community anchors like churches in planning and implementing urban agriculture programs.
73 AG	Urban Ag	More community gardens
74 AG	Urban Ag	Database of potential garden spaces
75 AG	Urban Ag	Phytoremediation - surround Zombie homes with sunflowers to clean soil
76 AG	Urban Ag	Funding for community gardens
77 AG	Urban Ag	Contribute small monetary donation or seeds, tools, etc. and receive some produce from a community garden
78 AG	Urban Ag	Incentives for youth to participate in gardening
79 AG	Urban Ag	Development of garden clubs
80 AG	Urban Ag	Opportunities for residents to pick their own food
81 AG	Urban Ag	better use of open land for gardens
82 AG	Urban Ag	herb gardens for apartments
83 AG	Urban Ag	tap into existing gardeners, clubs, use snowflake to grow network
84 AG	Urban Ag	Have different roles to involve communities in gardening, organize in a chart
85 AG	Urban Ag	Community gardening stewardship program
86 AG	Urban Ag	Development of productive lots (gardening) and developing a matrix throughout the city of NF
87 AG	Waste	Composting program for NF
88 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Improved hours at farmers markets to suit people who work during the day
89 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Institution of regular mobile market/veggie van
90 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Strengthen outreach and marketing of NF City Market
91 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Bring SNAP program to NF City Market
92 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Increased access to fridges, stoves for low-income, food insecure NF residents
93 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Bring SNAP matching, Double Up Food Bucks nutrition-incentive program to NF City Market; increase # of shoppers at FM
94 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Healthy Corner Store Initiative
95 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Zoning capabilities for a new grocery store, along with funding opportunities
96 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Address lack of high quality, nutritious foods in areas of NF
97 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Enactment of a healthy corner store initiative
98 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Transparency in grocery stores
99 HN	Access to Healthy Food	food miles and food origin/farmer, etc.
100 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Increased school funding for healthy eating
101 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Package and reuse of foods where possible (sanitary issues with prepared foods)
102 HN	Access to Healthy Food	A new farmers market (11th street)
103 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Encourage breastfeeding policy
104 HN	Access to Healthy Food	Facilitate SNAP enrollment

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# Full List of Actions (Consolidated)

Creating A Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative  
 Healthy Food Healthy People Work Group  
 LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN - PROPOSED ACTIONS

PRIMARY	SUB CATEGORY	PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS
105	HN	Access to Healthy Food
106	HN	Access to Healthy Food
107	HN	Access to Healthy Food
108	HN	Access to Healthy Food
109	HN	Access to Healthy Food
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126	HN	Access to Healthy Food
127	HN	Access to Healthy Food
128	HN	Access to Healthy Food
129	HN	Access to Healthy Food
130	HN	Access to Healthy Food
131	HN	Business Development
132	HN	Business Development
133	HN	Business Development
134	HN	Business Development
135	HN	Citizen Engagement
136	HN	Citizen Engagement
137	HN	Citizen Engagement
138	HN	Citizen Engagement
139	HN	Citizen Engagement
140	HN	Citizen Engagement
141	HN	Citizen Engagement
142	HN	Community Improvement
143	HN	Community Improvement
144	HN	Community Improvement
145	HN	Community Improvement
146	HN	Community Improvement
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151	HN	Community Improvement
152	HN	Community Improvement
153	HN	Community Improvement
154	HN	Community Improvement
155	HN	Community Improvement
156	HN	Community Improvement

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# Full List of Actions (Consolidated)

Creating A Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative  
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PRIMARY	SUB CATEGORY	PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS
157	HN	Community Improvement Less air pollution
158	HN	Community Improvement Soil contamination
159	HN	Community Improvement Pest control in schools
160	HN	Community Improvement More public art and creative spaces
161	HN	Community Improvement Fighting land speculation
162	HN	Community Improvement theme nights
163	HN	Community Improvement Flexibility in menus
164	HN	Community Improvement Transportation for locals and tourists
165	HN	Community Improvement Improved amenities at NF City Market, including access to bathrooms, food, etc. for customers & vendors.
166	EDU	Ag Urban gardening courses
167	EDU	Ag Planter gardening programs (herbs to start)
168	EDU	Ag Niagara County farm tours for NF residents; agricultural education
169	EDU	Ag Integrate agriculture education into school curriculums
170	EDU	Ag Summer Ag Camps for youth
171	EDU	Ag Promote Ag as a viable/respected vocation
172	EDU	Ag Programs for food production, quality, professionalism, customer service
173	EDU	Ag -Teach residents creative ways to garden without traditional plots or raised beds (i.e. utilizing aluminum gutters or plastic buckets).
174	EDU	Ag -Develop programs that use urban farming as a vehicle to teach economics, marketing, adaptability and other skills that are valuable to entrepreneurs and employers.
175	EDU	Ag Education on how to grow food yourself
176	EDU	Ag Education for farmers that then become preferred source (like Wegman's)
177	EDU	Ag Integrate working in gardens into summer camps, other youth programs
178	EDU	Cooking Cooking and food preservation classes made available to NF population
179	EDU	Cooking Food origins/farm to table
180	EDU	Cooking Fermentation classes
181	EDU	Cooking Pilot project on European cooking skills
182	EDU	Cooking Food storage/food preparation classes
183	EDU	Cooking Community kitchen in NF (nutrition and community resources made available)
184	EDU	Cooking Consumer education (e.g. how to prepare variety of produce, recipes, seasonality, preservation)
185	EDU	Cooking Capitalize on fermentation fad
186	EDU	Cooking Peer-to-peer education for food businesses on procurement best practices
187	EDU	Cooking Food waste program - education piece
188	EDU	Cooking Authentic cultural food as an opportunity for residents to explore more tastes
189	EDU	Cooking Cooking competitions, theme events
190	EDU	Cooking Teach people how to cook
191	EDU	Cooking Education about seasonality of food
192	EDU	Cooking how to buy in bulk/proper storage
193	EDU	Cooking Recipe sharing
194	EDU	Cooking Cooking party
195	EDU	Cooking Make cooking videos, content on Snapchat
196	EDU	Cooking how to stretch food dollars (budgeting)
197	EDU	Cooking Information on canning and pickling
198	EDU	Cooking how to make healthy food at low cost
199	EDU	Cooking How to shop and maximize time and money
200	EDU	Cooking Host "local food" day
201	EDU	Cooking Cook within the season
202	EDU	Cooking portion sizes where possible like institutions or pre-packaged meals
203	EDU	Farm to School Adoption of a local school garden program with the capability of harvesting for school lunches
204	EDU	Farm to School Improved lunch program; farm to school options
205	EDU	Farm to School Higher standards for cafeteria kitchen and staff
206	EDU	Farm to School Consistency and transparency in school lunches
207	EDU	Farm to School Improve quality, nutrition and aesthetic of school lunches to promote healthy eating among younger population.
208	EDU	Farm to School Cleaner school lunch environment

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PRIMARY	SUB CATEGORY	PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS
209	EDU Farm to School	Give students a voice in lunch menu selection
210	EDU Farm to School	Gathering more information from youth, survey high school and bring it to BOE
211	EDU Farm to School	Youth will try foods their friends try and like
212	EDU Nutrition	Delivery for seniors, disabled
213	EDU Nutrition	School-based nutrition education program
214	EDU Nutrition	Nutrition education classes
215	EDU Nutrition	Reading labels/transparency in ingredients
216	EDU Nutrition	Maximize nutrition/flavor of fresh F&V
217	EDU Nutrition	Education/awareness of portion sizes
218	EDU Nutrition	Slowly introduce people to healthy food, free sampling and extra deals
219	EDU Nutrition	-Broaden the tastes and palates of Niagara Falls residents by exposing them to healthy alternatives to greasy local food staples
220	EDU Nutrition	-Target youth with early interventions about the importance of a varied and healthy diet.
221	EDU Nutrition	Effects of obesity
222	EDU Nutrition	Make people aware of good online ordering options
223	EDU Nutrition	Educational videos, book clubs
224	EDU Nutrition	Interactive classes
225	EDU Waste	compost program at NCCC
226	EDU Workforce	Job development and training programs surrounding urban agriculture and local food access
227	EDU Workforce	Knife skills
228	EDU Workforce	NF Culinary Institute can expand community education and workforce development, basic knife skills
229	EDU Workforce	ESL programs to train employees
COLOR - KEY SOURCE FOR ACTION ITEM		
	REC	
	Youth	
	Ag	
	Business	
	Urban Ag	
	Low Hanging Fruit	
	Consumer Surveys	

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# Appendix E

## Glossary of Terms

**Agritourism:** The act of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural or agri-business operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation.

**Aquaculture:** A fish farm with the primary objective being to raise fish for consumption.

**Aquaponics:** The symbiotic cultivation of plants and aquatic animals in a recirculating environment

**Cage-Free:** A claim, typically seen on egg carton labels, that the hens were not confined in cages; this does not necessarily mean the hens had access to the outdoors, however.

**Civic Engagement:** Working to make a difference in the civic life our communities.

**Community Gardens:** Single plots of land gardened by a community of people for the cultivation of food or flowers; typically on a small scale.

**Community Supported Agriculture (CSA):** A food production and distribution system that directly connects farmers and consumers; people buy “shares” of a farm’s harvest in advance and then receive a portion of the crops as they’re harvested.

**Consumer:** A person who purchases goods or services for personal use.

**Cover Cropping:** A crop of a specific plant that is grown primarily for the benefit of the soil rather than the crop yield; commonly used to suppress weeds, manage soil erosion, help build and improve soil fertility and quality, and control diseases and pests.

**Crop Rotation:** A method of farming where a number of different plants are grown one after the other on a field so that the soil stays healthy and fertile.

**Cultivation:** The act of caring for or raising plants.

**Economic Development:** Use of current human, social, institutional, and physical resources to build a self-sustaining economic system.

**Entrepreneurship:** Organizing, managing, and assuming the risks of a business or enterprise.

**Equity:** Something that is fair and just.

**Farm Stands:** A stand that sells farm produce; typically seen along the sides of our roadways.

**Farm to Fork:** The various processes in the food chain from agricultural production to consumption; also known as Farm to Table.

**Farm to School:** A program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices within schools.

**Farmers Market:** A food market that typically operates multiple times per year, or on a regular basis, and is organized to create personal connections that provide benefits for local farmers, consumers, and communities.

**Food Access:** Determined by a variety of factors: The income of people experiencing hunger, the racial or cultural background of certain populations, and the distance between people and food markets.

**Food Consumption:** Part of the Food System; the using up a food resource to help meet our nutritional needs to sustain our bodies.

**Food Deserts:** Neighborhoods that have limited access to affordable and nutritious food.

**Food Distribution:** Part of the Food System; collecting and delivering food.

**Food Processing:** Part of the Food System; taking the raw food products and preparing them for consumption.

**Food Production:** Part of the Food System; growing the raw product including grains, fruits and vegetables, and raising animals for meat or other products, including milk or cheese.

**Food Security:** Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life; when this doesn't exist, people may be considered "food insecure."

**Food System:** The integration of food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management in an effort to enhance the resiliency of local and regional food supply chains.

**Food Waste Management:** Part of the Food System; handling the food waste that occurs across the food system—from the farm including post-harvest to the consumer level.

**Foodshed:** The geographic location that produces the food for a particular population; a region where food flows from the area of production to the place where it is consumed, including the land it grows on, the route it travels, the markets it passes through, and the tables it ends up on.

**Free-Range:** A claim that implies chickens were raised freely outdoors; the definition does not include requirements for the size of the outdoor area, how accessible it is to the chickens, or how often and for how long each day the chickens have access to the outdoors.

**GMO-Free:** A food substance that is without any genetically modified organisms (GMOs); Scientists and consumer and environmental groups have cited many health and environmental risks with foods containing GMOs.

**Grass-Fed:** Animals—typically cattle—used to produce meat and dairy that were raised on pasture and fed only grass and hay.

**Greenhouse:** A glass building in which plants are grown that need protection from cold weather.

**Hoop Houses:** Temporary or permanent structures typically made of piping and covered with translucent material for the purpose of growing food or ornamental crops.

**Hydroponics:** The cultivation of plants in a nutrient solution rather than soil.

**Industrial-Scale Agriculture:** A process of mechanizing the growing, harvesting, and processing of food.

**Infrastructure:** In an urban setting: The systems that are vital to the basic functions of a city, such as energy, transportation, water, waste management, and telecommunications.

**Integrated Pest Management:** An approach to pest control that focuses on prevention by eliminating the root causes of pest problems.

**Irrigation:** The supply of water to land or crops to help growth, typically by means of channels.

**Local Food:** The distance between where the food was grown and where it is sold or consumed; produce bought directly from the farm, either at the farm itself or at farmers market; the characteristics of the environment where the food is grown.

**Locally Grown:** Food and other agricultural products (for example, wool or flowers) that are grown or produced, processed, and then sold within a certain area.

**Orchards:** A piece of land planted with fruit trees.

**Organic Food:** Foods that are produced according to certain production standards. For crops, it means they were grown without the use of conventional pesticides, artificial fertilizers, human waste, or sewage sludge, and that they were processed without ionizing radiation or food additives. For animals, it means they were reared without the routine use of antibiotics and without the use of growth hormones.

**Phytoremediation:** An emerging technology that uses various plants to degrade, extract, contain, or immobilize contaminants from soil and water.

**Procurement:** The process of finding, agreeing to terms and acquiring goods, services, or works from an external source.

**Rainwater Catchment:** A technique used for collecting, storing, and using rainwater for landscape irrigation and other purposes.

**Revitalization:** A set of initiatives aimed at reorganizing an existing city structure, particularly in neighborhoods in decline due to economic or social reasons.

**Subsidies:** A form of financial aid or support extended to an economic sector (or institution, business, or individual) generally with the aim of promoting economic and social policy.

**Sustainable:** Able to be maintained at a certain rate or level.

**Synthetic Fertilization:** Man-made inorganic compounds—usually derived from by-products of the petroleum industry.

**Tree Farms:** A privately owned forest managed for timber production.

**Urban Agriculture:** Growing or producing food in a city; commercial or large-scale food production within an urban setting.

**Urban Blight:** The deterioration of part of a town or city due to aging, neglect, and lack of financial support for maintenance.

**Urban Farms:** A location where farming or gardening occurs within a city or urban setting; typically on a large scale.

**Workforce Development:** A relatively wide range of activities, policies, and programs employed by geographies to create, sustain, and retain a viable workforce that can support current and future business and industry.

**Zombie Properties:** Properties abandoned by owners under the threat of foreclosure but for which the process has yet to be completed.