



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Dr. Alexander Summers, Medical Officer of Health  
Emily Williams, Chief Executive Officer

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## REPRESENTATION ON THE FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the Board of Health:*

- 1) Appoint a Board of Health representative to the Middlesex-London Food Policy Council as a voting member for a two (2) year term or direct the Medical Officer of Health to appoint a senior staff member to the Middlesex-London Food Policy Council as a voting member for a two (2) year term; and*
- 2) Receive Report No. 12-23 re: Board of Health Representation on the Food Policy Council for information.*

### **Key Points**

- The Middlesex-London Food Policy Council (MLFPC) has been operational since 2016 and has made steady progress toward the development of a sustainable local food system. The MLFPC membership includes a voting member appointed by the Board of Health; this is currently vacant.
- An MLHU Registered Dietitian is a non-voting executive member of the MLFPC and provides coordination, administrative support and engages in program planning and implementation where MLFPC activities align with the MLHU's food systems program.
- The MLFPC has updated the Middlesex London Community Food Assessment (MLCFA) in 2022, the report will be available early in 2023 and will guide the priorities of the MLFPC work.

### **Background**

A sustainable food system is defined as a system that delivers food and nutrition security for all in such a way that the “economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised”(3, 4). A sustainable local food system is essential for a resilient and healthy community. Food systems are complex, non-linear, systems that “embrace all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructure, institutions, markets and trade) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution and marketing, preparation and consumption of food. The Middlesex London Food Policy council has been operational since 2016 and is making steady progress toward providing food systems leadership. The MLFPC identifies challenges in local food systems and plays a role in sustainable food systems through policy, innovation, network building and education and outreach opportunities. Public health is integral to the development of a sustainable local food system and community food security where citizens are empowered through policies and programs to participate in strengthening their food environment (5). Momentum for a more sustainable local food system in Middlesex-London has been growing since 2011, as outlined in [Report No. 052-15](#) and [Report No. 043-16](#).

## MLFPC Membership

The MLFPC has a diverse membership representing many parts of the food system, including production, distribution, consumption, waste and more. As outlined in the MLFPC's Terms of Reference (attached as [Appendix A](#)), the MLFPC is comprised of a combination of elected and appointed members. Members must endorse the mission, goals, and values of the Council. The Terms of Reference indicate that the Middlesex-London Board of Health can appoint a representative to a voting position. This appointment to the MLFPC is for a two (2) year term. The appointed representative does not commit program resources or funding but provides a public health lens to support the council's policy, research, and action group activities.

The MLHU also provides coordination through a non-voting executive member in the form of a 0.25 FTE Registered Dietitian. The coordinator acts as a consistent point of contact for MLFPC to facilitate collaboration and dialogue with the city and county staff, food systems stakeholders and community members. The Registered Dietitian also provides briefings and tools to assist in the orientation and work of the voting representative.

## MLFPC Strategic Plan

The MLFPC has developed a strategic plan for 2022-2024. The strategic priorities are to: Become a trusted voice regarding our food system, create purposeful impact on our food system, and build council engagement and capacity. These priorities align with the Health Unit's mission to promote and protect community health, the Ontario Public Health' Environments and Climate Change Guideline; the City of London Climate Emergency Action Plan; Public Health Ontario's Evidence Brief on Sustainable Food Systems; and Agriculture Canada's food policy for Canada.

The MLFPC received funding from the City of London Community recovery network in 2021, and with these funds have completed or are in the implementation stages of several projects including: hosting an Agri food panel (June 2022) and a food literacy event (November 2022), Updating the Middlesex London Community Food assessment (available early 2023), conducting an environmental scan of municipal food systems, policies and practices (expected completion May 2023), and Exploring the framework, and steps for creation of a regional agri-food network (expected July 2023).

## Next Steps

It is recommended that the Board of Health appoint a member representative to the Middlesex-London Food Policy Council as a voting member or direct the Medical Officer of Health to appoint a senior staff member to the Middlesex-London Food Policy Council as a voting member for a two (2) year term. The Health Unit provides an important public health perspective for planning and decision-making and helps maintain the MLFPC as a community organization anchored in health, with a commitment to food system sustainability.

References are noted in [Appendix B](#).

This report was prepared by the Community Health Promotion Team, Healthy Living Division.



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