



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health / CEO

DATE: 2018 June 21

MIDDLESEX-LONDON FOOD POLICY COUNCIL PROGRESS REPORT

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 037-18 re: “Middlesex-London Food Policy Council Progress Report” be received for information.

Key Points

- The Middlesex-London Food Policy Council (MLFPC), established in 2016, provides food system leadership through its partnerships, website, social media communications, and community events.
- Guided by a strategic plan for 2018–21, the MLFPC aims to advance and inform public policy measures that will strengthen the local food system, empower citizens to engage in local food system change, and enhance coordination between all food system sectors.

Background

A healthy local food system is essential for a vibrant and healthy community. At the June 2016 Board of Health meeting, [Report No. 043-16](#) noted the completion of the Middlesex-London Community Food Assessment (MLCFA), the establishment of the MLFPC, and the appointment of a Board of Health representative to the Council as a voting member. The Health Unit provides coordination and administrative support to the Council and its operations. This was made possible by a 2016 PBMA investment in a 0.5 FTE Registered Dietitian (RD) to increase the Health Unit’s capacity to address food systems and the food environment. Through this investment and increase in capacity, the Health Unit is better positioned to address economic, social, environmental, and nutritional food system factors that can inequitably impact individuals’ food decisions and health status. The RD assigned to the food systems portfolio supports the MLFPC’s work by: providing communications support for the website and student volunteers; coordinating and facilitating Council meetings; preparing monthly newsletters and stakeholder/membership communications; and providing programmatic leadership related to strategic planning.

As part of its contribution to the MLCFA, the Health Unit collected two rounds of Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS) survey data from Middlesex-London residents, between September 2015 and August 2016, pertaining to local food procurement. The data, summarized in [Appendix A](#), showed that Middlesex-London residents are interested and committed to purchasing locally produced food if and when it is available. This local data reinforces the need and support for programs, services, and policies that address food accessibility and local food procurement, processing, and distribution.

www.healthunit.com/uploads/2018-06-21-report-037-18-appendix-b.pdf

Middlesex-London Food Policy Council Progress

Following a community call to action for membership applications, the MLFPC was formed and held its inaugural meeting on November 29, 2016. In 2017, the Council established an Executive Committee and finalized its [Terms of Reference](#). The MLFPC’s vision is to sustain a healthy, safe, equitable, and

ecologically responsible food system that nourishes all local residents and is economically viable. Its mission is to: 1) be a forum for discussing local food issues; 2) empower citizens to be involved in food system decisions; 3) foster coordination between food system sectors; 4) create, evaluate, and influence policy; and 5) support programs and services that address local needs. The Council achieves its mission through advocacy, communication, coordination, education, evaluation, leveraging community resources, research, and networking.

During the first year of Council activities, four Action Groups were established to begin work on food system priority issues, as identified by the MLCFA: 1) Food Literacy; 2) Food Accessibility; 3) Food Procurement, Processing, and Distribution; and 4) Rural/Urban/Indigenous Connection. In their inaugural year, these Action Groups became forums for discussing issues, empowering and engaging citizens, and fostering coordination. A workshop on barriers to local food procurement for institutions was attended by stakeholders from academia, health, and business. A food literacy networking event brought together stakeholders from the city and county for a dynamic session of learning and making new connections. Approximately fifty representatives from the food distribution, retail, and non-profit sectors attended “Beyond Waste: Food Recovery and Redistribution,” a networking forum to encourage public-private collaboration around food recovery and redistribution.

A Communications Committee was also formed to develop a consistent brand for the MLFPC, promote awareness of the newly formed Council, and provide oversight for establishing a [website](#) and a communications strategy. With the assistance of Fanshawe College and Brescia University College students, the MLFPC has established a social media presence on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

At its Annual General Meeting in April, the MLFPC recognized the contributions of many individuals and groups in Middlesex County and the City of London who have contributed to an improved food system. Awards were presented to fourteen exceptional local food champions who exemplify leadership, innovation, and inspiration in working toward creative and unique solutions to overcoming barriers within our food system ([Appendix B](#)). The MLFPC’s [2017 Annual Report](#) includes Action Group highlights from its first year, a Council membership list, and a financial statement, plus it provides direction for future activities by the Council.

MLFPC Future Priorities

The Strategic Plan for 2018–21, attached as [Appendix C](#), outlines four priorities, including: 1) Building Council Strength; 2) Defining Shared Language and Metrics; 3) Developing an Information Repository; and 4) Building Pathways to Affect Food Policy Change. These priorities align well with the Health Unit’s mission to promote and protect community health through values of collaboration, empowering citizens, excellence, and equity. Activities for the next three years include developing a sustainable funding model, providing consistent food system information based on credible evidence, creating partnerships and channels of communication within the Middlesex-London food community, and positioning the MLFPC as the community voice on food system policy issues.

This report prepared by the Healthy Living Division.



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