

York Region Food Charter

Morgan Sage

on behalf of the York Region Food Council

The York Region Food Council envisions a community where health and social justice are prioritized, and all residents have economic and physical access to nutritious, local, culturally acceptable and environmentally sustainable food.



What is a Food Charter?

- A statement of values and directions to guide food and agriculture policy and action.
- Developed by a broad spectrum of organizations, residents, and institutions.
- Addresses a range of issues and opportunities related to food and agriculture.
- Serve as a guide for developing food policies and programs, and act as a reference for coordinated efforts.

Other regions with Charters

- Toronto
- Thunder Bay
- Guelph Wellington
- London
- Sudbury
- Peel Region
- Durham Region
- Kawartha Lakes
- Waterloo
- Hamilton
- Simcoe

What is the York Region Food Charter?

- The process to develop the Charter included public consultations and an online survey.
- **Published in 2013**
- **Outcomes:**
 - Enhanced collaborations between sectors on food and agriculture issues in York Region
 - Provided opportunities for education, outreach, public awareness, public consultation and funding.
 - York Region Food Council (2018)



**YORK REGION
FOOD CHARTER**

*A GUIDING DOCUMENT FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF COORDINATED
FOOD-RELATED POLICIES AND
PROGRAMS IN YORK REGION*

We believe a collaborative and integrated approach is essential to create a healthy and just food system for all.

We value...

- HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**
 - Access to a variety of healthy and affordable food in all neighbourhoods and facilities.
 - Food policies and practices to improve and inspire health.
 - The importance of food for physical, mental, emotional and cultural wellbeing.
 - Community ownership of healthy, locally-grown and processed food.
- ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**
 - Rural and urban agriculture practices that protect biodiversity and improve the health of our land, soil, water, and air.
 - Integrating agriculture and food into energy and climate change policies and strategies.
 - Protection of agricultural lands and a streamlined regulatory framework.
 - Reducing food and packaging waste among consumers, retailers, processors and producers.
- EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**
 - The basic right of all residents to safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate, accessible food.
 - Dignified access to food for all.
 - Fair compensation and a safe and respectful work environment in the agriculture and food sectors.
- ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**
 - Economic development plans that ensure robust and financially sustainable agriculture.
 - Innovative food and related industries that unite producer, processor, distributor, health, tourism, education and hospitality sectors.
 - Locally-grown traditional and world foods.
- EDUCATION AND SKILLS**
 - Food literacy and skills for all residents, with a focus on food growing, healthy cooking, and composting.
 - Education that supports opportunities in the agriculture and food sector.
 - Understanding the connections between food, farming, health and the environment.



The York Region Food Charter aligns with a food movement across Canada, promoting a system from farm to plate that provides access to local, affordable and nutritious food. The York Region Food Charter is a vision of thriving urban and rural communities where residents, businesses, and governments are creating a resilient food system.

March 2013

Find us online at www.yorkregionfoodcharter.com

The Update Process

- **January 2023** - York Region Food Council voted to update the Charter
 - **Spring & Summer 2023** - Formed Food Charter Working Group and drafted work plan
 - **Summer & Fall 2023** - Consulted with the Food Council & Working Group to create a new Draft Food Charter
 - **Fall 2023 - Winter 2024** - Consultations
 - **Spring 2024** - Analyzed feedback & incorporated into the Food Charter and Action Document
 - **Summer 2024** - Final consultations
 - **Fall 2024**- Graphic Design & Food Council finalization
 - **December 2024** - Food Council approved the Food Charter & accompanying documents
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YORK REGION FOOD CHARTER

The York Region Food Charter outlines collective values and priorities and is a guiding document for food-related policies and action.

The Food Charter is a vision of thriving urban and rural communities as well as First Nations and Indigenous Communities where residents, organizations, businesses, and governments work together to create a resilient food system that fosters healthy communities.

The Food Charter is centered on food sovereignty¹ and community-determined food and agriculture systems. This document is intended to build connection and responsibility to the land, and healthier food systems.



York Region Food Charter

We seek to meaningfully engage diverse voices that represent York Region's communities and address issues in appropriate and relevant ways. By addressing food related issues, we strive to have a local impact while working towards systemic change in food, community and social justice. This includes reconciliation and supporting the resurgence of knowledge and traditional ways of knowing and doing.

The York Region food system is built on a history of oppression that continues to this day. The impact of this oppression is vast and includes a disconnection from the land and the loss of natural ways of living on the land, such as freely foraging and harvesting food. The ongoing process of colonialism has attempted to undermine the traditional and cultural food traditions of Indigenous, Black and racialized communities. We recognize that these communities continue to be impacted disproportionately by food insecurity, which can only be addressed by self-governance and support, if requested.



01. Equity, Social Justice & Food Security²

We value the right to food and community-determined food and agriculture systems. We believe everyone should have enough income to effectively prevent food insecurity.³



02. Health & Well-Being

We value the role of food in promoting health, including physical, mental, emotional, cultural, social and spiritual well-being.



03. Local Agri-Food Sector⁴

We value the role of the agri-food sector in cultivating a strong economy and equitable local food system while ensuring environmental sustainability.



04. Environmental Stewardship

We value a sustainable food system that protects and enhances the natural environment while working alongside First Nations and Indigenous Communities.



05. Knowledge & Sharing

We value sharing knowledge and supporting food literacy⁵ so that all community members can confidently choose to grow, cook, compost, or participate in food-related careers, contributing to a more sustainable future for the next seven generations.



06. Community & Culture

We value food as a link that brings communities together and connects people to people, land, culture and identity.

YORK REGION FOOD CHARTER ACTION DOCUMENT



	York Region Food Council	Working Groups	Municipal Gov	Regional Gov	Organizations	Businesses	Public Institutions
Equity, Social Justice & Food Security							
Advocate at all levels of government for evidence-based policies which have been proven to reduce food insecurity. This could include advocating for the implementation of a livable minimum wage, increasing social assistance rates and enhancing the Canada Disability Benefit.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support partners with the creation of advocacy tools and training geared towards municipal, provincial and federal governments. Use these tools to support the development of robust policies that ensure adequate incomes so that all York Region residents have equitable access to food.	✓	✓	✓				
Collaboration with governments and community partners in First Nations, Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized communities to determine priorities for action to address food insecurity and poverty.	✓				✓		
Increase awareness of poverty, food insecurity, and income related issues for politicians, policymakers and the public through channels such as social media, events, and press releases.	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Empower people with lived experience of food insecurity and poverty to create systems change through peer advocacy while offering the appropriate support and infrastructure (e.g., peer networks, compensation).	✓	✓			✓		
Collaborate with the York Region Food Council in the creation of advocacy tools and training geared towards municipal, provincial and federal governments.					✓		

Alignment of the York Region Food Charter with Regional Policies and Plans

- **Official Plan 2022**

- 2.3 Supporting Complete Communities
 - 2.3.9 “support and enhance urban agriculture and access to healthy and locally grown food and agricultural products.”
 - 2.3.39-45 Affordable housing
- 2.4.12 “To recognize and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of York Region’s ethnic and cultural groups.”
- 5.0 Supporting the Agricultural System
 - “... supporting a vibrant agricultural community and contributing to the economy, quality of life and natural heritage legacy.”

- **Community Safety & Well-Being Plans**

- Food security as central to healthy communities

- **Climate Change Action Plan**

- Action 10: Promote a sustainable and local resilient food system
- Action 11: Support waste prevention and circular economy practices in York Region

- **Agri Food Strategy**

- **SM4RT Living Plan**

Alignment of the York Region Food Charter with King Policies and Plans

- **Official Plan 2019**
 - **3.6 Addressing Land Use Impacts** “That the geographic continuity of the agricultural land base and the functional and economic connections to the agri-food network shall be maintained and enhanced.”
 - **7.4 Agri-Food Strategy**
 - Encourage Farmers Markets, urban agriculture, good farm and land stewardship practices, support festivals and events with King products and produce, and more
- **Corporate Strategic Plan**
 - A Greener Future: Planning for a green and sustainable future means finding ways to adapt to climate change pressures while also offsetting the effects that it has already had.”
 - Complete Communities: “Enrich community well-being and make King the ideal place to live, work and play” (Objective 2)
- **Community Tourism Plan 2021** - highlights agriculture and food-related tourism
- **ThinKING 5.2 Community Gardens** “to encourage urban agriculture and promote locally grown food”
- **Climate Change Action Plan [In development]**

What's Next?

Cornerstone Document

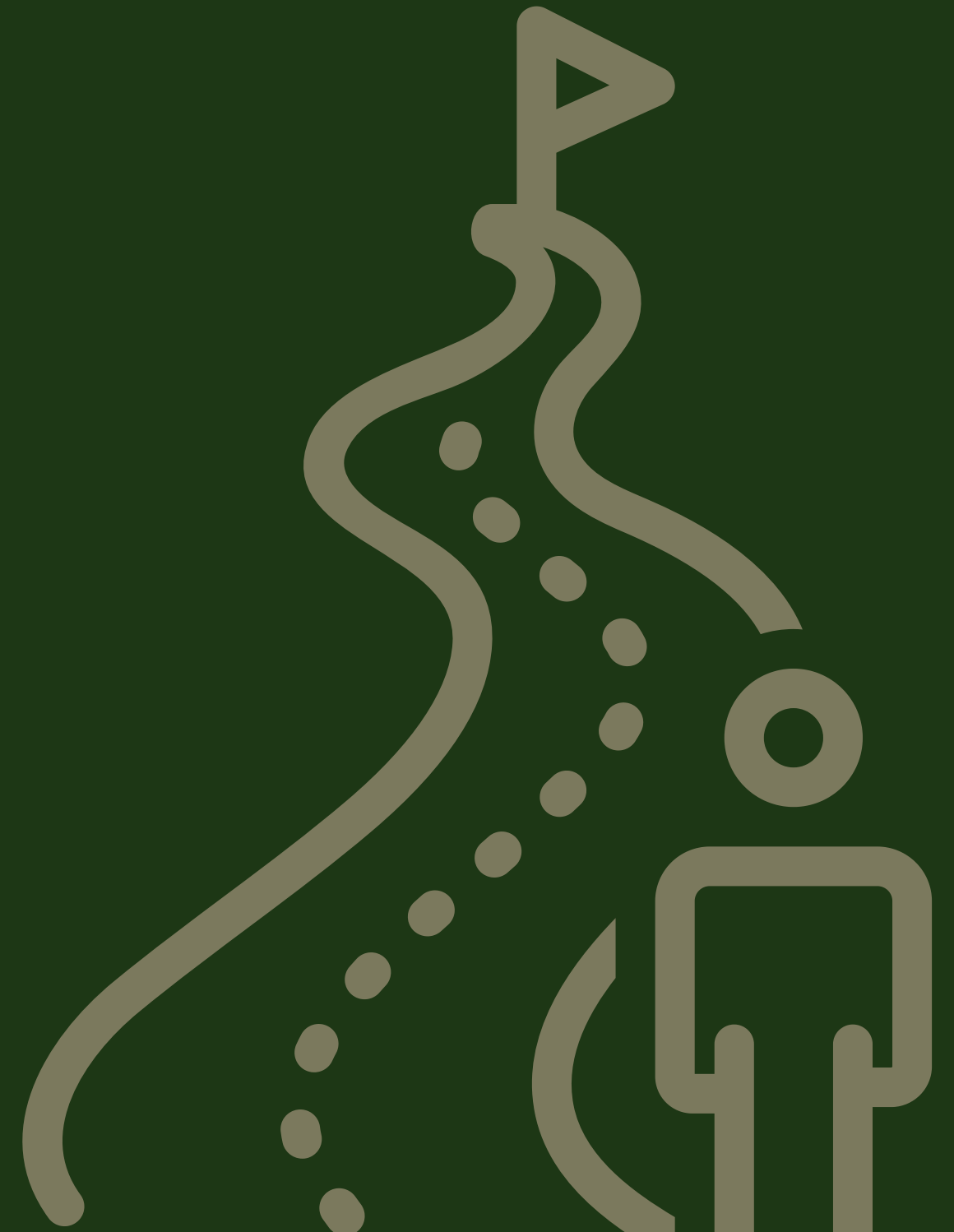
- Food System Report Card
- Advocacy & Initiatives

Public Dissemination

- Communications channels
- Event

Endorsements

- Municipalities
- York Region
- Organizations



What does it mean to endorse the Food Charter?

- Recognize that agriculture and food is central to complete and healthy communities.
- Advance the vision of the Food Charter.
- Commitment to sharing municipal agriculture and food activities with the York Region Food Council.



Questions

Contact

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