WINNIPEG FOOD COUNCIL

2020 Annual Report

The Winnipeg Food Council conducts its work in Treaty No. 1 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinabe (Ojibway), Ininew (Cree), Oji-Cree, Dene, and Dakota.
Treaty 1 land is the Birthplace of the Métis Nation and the Heart of the Métis Nation Homeland.

Message from the Chair



It continues to be my honour to serve as Chair of the Winnipeg Food Council. 2020 was a year like no other and brought extra challenges and responsibilities for this committee. The strength and expertise of our membership helped us rise to these challenges and I am delighted with the progress we have made, as outlined in this report.

I am happy to report that in 2020 the Winnipeg Food Council secured funding through the city's multi-year budget process, ensuring we are well equipped to continue our work in the years ahead.

Our Meadowood Victory Garden was another highlight this year. Responding to the impacts of the pandemic, this garden helped provide residents with fresh, healthy food, using city water and land to grow vegetables. A huge thank you to our Coordinator, and partners at the St. Vital Arena and Lawson Sales for making this a reality.

Moving forward, I am eager to build on our work this year to continue to advance the goals of the Winnipeg Food Council.

Thank-you,

Councillor Brian Mayes
Winnipeg Food Council Chair

Winnipeg Food Council members

Our members bring skills and experience in areas such as community food security, research and communications, and strategic planning which allows us to contribute to policy development and influence change.



Back Row (L-R): Nancy Cooke, James Battershill, Blair Yakimoski, Councillor Jason Schreyer, Lavonne Harms, Councillor Brian Mayes (Chair).

Front Row (L-R): Andi Sharma (Co-Chair), Karin Kliewer (Winnipeg Public Service), Abby Legaspi, Jeanette Sivilay (Committee Coordinator), Bruce Berry

Not pictured: Kelly Janz, Jasmine Tara

Councillor Brian Mayes, Chairperson
Councillor Jason Schreyer
James Battershill – Food Production
Bruce Berry – Food Production

Nancy Cooke – Citizen Member
Lavonne Harms – Health (nominated by WRHA)
Kelly Janz – Research
Abby Legaspi – Community Group

Andi Sharma – Citizen Member; Co-Chair
Jasmine Tara – Citizen Member
Blair Yakimoski – Food Business

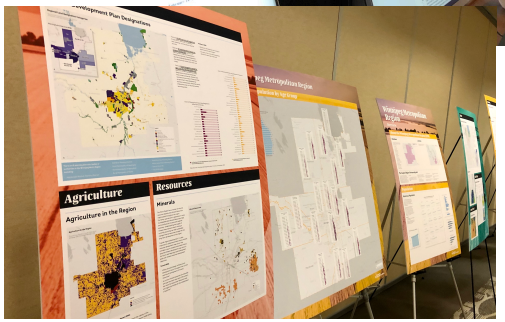
Winnipeg Food Council function

The Winnipeg Food Council is a committee of volunteer citizen experts advising on a range of municipal food systems issues through research and community consultation.

The Winnipeg Food Council operates through the work and guidance of its subcommittees. In 2020 the Winnipeg Food Council amalgamated the development subcommittee and communications subcommittee to enhance its function and better reflect its needs. The Winnipeg Food Council now has two subcommittees. The research and policy subcommittee undertakes projects and research activities on food systems related issues and policy. The development and communication subcommittee advises and aids in committee longevity, communications and public engagement.

In March 2020, with the help of Food Council Chair Councillor Brian Mayes, the Winnipeg Food Council was successful in obtaining funding for a Coordinator through the City of Winnipeg multi-year budget process.





Above: Rainbow Community Gardens presentation at a Winnipeg Food Council meeting in February, 2020.

Left: Attending the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region Regional Growth Management and Servicing Plan consultation in February, 2020.



Left: Attending the ProBono Students Canada virtual launch event with greetings from Senator Murray Sinclair in September, 2020.

Below: Touring the facility and announcing funds for the Fireweed Food Co-op COVID-19 food box program in October, 2020.



Winnipeg Food Council in the Community

In 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Winnipeg Food Council found creative ways to participate and engage in community activities in order to expand awareness of the Food Council, foster connections with community stakeholders, and participate in consultation:

- January 8: Wolseley Residents Association community gardens committee meeting
- February 3: Winnipeg Metropolitan Region consultation on Regional Growth Management and Servicing Plan
- March 12: Municipal food policy presentation to University of Winnipeg Urban and Inner City Studies class
- April 2: Food Communities Network meeting of food policy councils across Canada regarding COVID-19 impacts and responses
- April 9: City of Winnipeg interdepartmental food security working group inaugural meeting
- April 22: Webinar on City of Victoria COVID-19 response, repurposing city resources for growing food
- May 1: Announcement of funds for the Bear Clan Patrol to support volunteers providing emergency food
- May 20: Published the Winnipeg Food Council COVID-19 public statement urging elected officials to act on rising food insecurity
- June 30: UN FAO City Region Food Systems webinar on the role of local food production for increasing resilience to COVID-19
- June 30: Community gardens tour at Sustainable South Osborne Community Co-op
- July 23: Green Roofs for Healthy Cities virtual symposium on urban agriculture
- August 6: Community gardens tour in Point Douglas and Mynarski wards
- August 11: Urban farm tour at Fort Whyte Farms
- August 18: OurWinnipeg 2045 consultation session with the Winnipeg public service
- September 9: Community gardens tour at Spence Neighbourhood Association
- September 21: ProBono Students Canada project launch event with greetings from Justice Murray Sinclair
- October 23: Poverty Reduction Strategy consultation session with the Winnipeg public service
- October 28: Announcement of funds for Fireweed Food Co-op COVID-19 food box program and facility tour
- November 12: Tour of St. Leon's urban garden
- November 16 – 19: Consultations on urban agriculture zoning by-laws with the Winnipeg public service
- November 19: Presentation at the Food and Farming in a Climate Emergency event co-hosted with Manitoba Eco-Network
- November 26: Food Matters Manitoba Food Action Hub webinar on lived experiences of food insecurity
- December 1 – 4: Canadian CED Network virtual Gathering
- December 9: NEXT CITY Solutions for Food Insecurity webinar

Vision

All Winnipeggers have what they need to eat well, all of the time.

Mission

Work with the Mayor, Councillors and city staff to fix food systems issues by advising on policy, relaying research, and sharing lessons learned through continual consultation.

Strategic Direction

Ensure that current City of Winnipeg bylaws and programs are being used to their full advantage for food equity; and that the city prioritizes food in its planning and initiatives.

The Winnipeg Food Atlas

The Winnipeg Food Council was happy to support and organize the launch event of the Winnipeg Food Atlas on February 5.

The Winnipeg Food Atlas is a community-developed resource to facilitate discussion and action around food and nutrition security issues in the Winnipeg Health Region. This resource was developed by Dr. Joyce Slater of the University of Manitoba, in collaboration with the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, The Winnipeg Food Council, Food Matters Manitoba, Harvest Manitoba, and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. The Atlas is hosted by the Social Planning Council on the Manitoba Collaborative Data Portal.

Over 130 people attended the launch, which featured a demonstration of the Winnipeg Food Atlas, it's contextual features and data dashboards. Andi Sharma, Winnipeg Food Council Co-Chair, brought greetings on behalf of our Chair and members.

Below: Attendees, including media and community leaders, fill the room on February 5.





Above: Promotional poster of the Winnipeg Food Atlas launch event
Below: Over 130 people attended the launch event on February 5



The Meadowood Victory Garden



The victory garden is located at the St. Vital Arena



Partners and volunteers speak with media at the garden



Recipes and information were sent out with each food box

The ongoing food system impacts of COVID-19 have had real repercussions for Winnipeggers. Due to food system and supply chain disruptions in early 2020, residents began paying closer attention to where our food comes from.

Interest in buying local food, gardening, and growing your own increased dramatically, and with it returned the victory garden mentality. The concept of a victory garden suggests that during times of crisis or uncertainty people plant gardens as a real means of feeding themselves.

In response, the Winnipeg Food Council decided to act immediately, starting the Meadowood Victory Garden in just a few days to raise awareness of the issue, and encourage others to produce food in the city to feed our ourselves and our communities.

Championed by our Chairperson, Councillor Brian Mayes, the Meadowood Victory Garden was a partnership between the St. Vital Minor Hockey Association, Lawson Sales, and the Winnipeg Food Council. Food was sent to residents at the neighbouring Village Canadienne Housing Co-op, the North End Stay and Play daycare, and North End Food Security Network Selkirk Avenue farmers market.

Currently this innovative project is the subject of a University of Manitoba research project to be completed in 2021 on the use of municipal resources for urban food production and food security.

"I thought everything was an amazing idea and a very good experience – shows how much care went into the preparation and kindness that came out of sharing food in our community."

- *Food box recipient*

10 weeks of harvest

Over 90 good food boxes sent to neighbours & community organizations

9 volunteers worked on the garden, from installation to final clean up

More than 282 pounds of produce harvested

13 different types of vegetables and herbs grown

Urban Agriculture zoning by-laws

In May 2020 the public service was directed to implement the recommendations of the Winnipeg Food Council Commercial Agriculture Uses report in time for the 2021 growing season. These recommendations include:

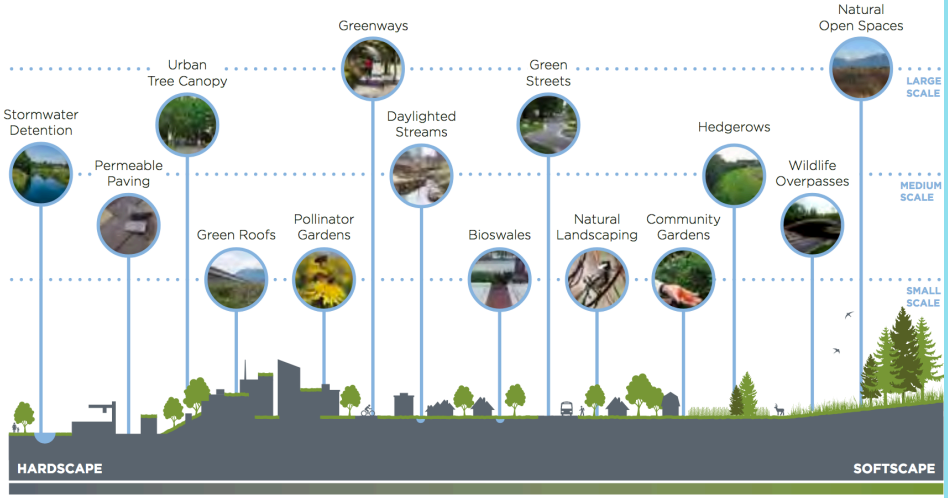
- Growing produce as a permitted principle use
- Commercial sale of produce
- Use of public land to grow produce

In November, the Winnipeg Food Council facilitated several consultations between the public service and stakeholders, including the Winnipeg Food Council research and policy subcommittee, Sustainable South Osborne Community Co-op, St. Leon's urban garden, 3 Guys Greens, Almost Urban Agriculture, Aurora Farms, and others.

The proposed by-law amendments will go to the Standing Policy Committee for public hearings in early 2021.



New urban agriculture zoning by-laws will be debated in 2021.



As presented in the Winnipeg Food Council Green Infrastructure Report, this figure shows how green infrastructure consists of small, medium, and large-scale green infrastructure interventions on a range from soft- to hard-scape options, including urban agriculture components such as community gardens.
(Image credit: Metro Vancouver regional green infrastructure policy documents)

Edible Green Infrastructure

The Winnipeg Food Council published a report on edible green infrastructure to engage in discussion about how green infrastructure (GI) can best serve the City of Winnipeg for stormwater management, while building sustainable food systems for social equity, wellbeing, and climate change resilience.

Examining the GI component of the City of Winnipeg Combined Sewer Overflow Master Plan, this report argues urban agriculture has a place in planning for stormwater management because of its ability to protect and improve permeable urban areas while providing important co-benefits.

The report urges the public service to consider GI pilot projects that:

- Are designed with food production as a central element,
- Include edible components, or
- Facilitate food production practices that benefit from stormwater harvesting systems.

This report was brought to Executive Policy Committee in January 2021.

Community Gardens report

The Winnipeg Food Council published a report on community gardens in response to increased interest and demand for community gardening space due to COVID-19, and the need to better support community gardens in Winnipeg as places to grow food, increase wellbeing, and be active outside both during the pandemic and into the future.

Our research examined opportunities and common barriers for community gardening in the city. With the help of a University of Manitoba student volunteer, the Winnipeg Food Council collected data on 45 different community run gardens, representing 895 gardeners. We collected data on overall production size, individual plot size, and water access, among other metrics.

We identified that the City of Winnipeg Community Gardens Policy, OurWinnipeg strategic plan, Newcomer Welcome and Inclusion Strategy, Climate Action Plan, and draft Poverty Reduction Strategy all support and speak favourably of the possible benefits of community gardens for Winnipeg residents.

To inform our report development, we toured gardens and spoke with community garden organizers at Sustainable South Osborne Community Co-op, Spence Neighbourhood Association, Charleswood Garden Club, St. James Horticultural Society, North End Food Security Network, Rainbow Community Gardens, and Point Douglas Community Gardens.

In part, we found that 38% of community run sites have inadequate water access, either relying on gardeners to haul water or use rain barrels as their only source of water. We also found that 74% of garden sites are small, at less than 1750 sq ft. Both of these pieces of data have implications for how best to support community run gardens with proper water access.

Currently, the Winnipeg Food Council, in partnership with Food Matters Manitoba, is working with ProBono Students Canada Manitoba Chapter to develop a jurisdictional scan of municipal community garden programs, lease agreements, and a summary of possible liability concerns from cities across Canada to help develop recommendations for community garden policy and program development in Winnipeg. This legal research will be completed in March 2021.



Silver Avenue community gardens



Spence Neighbourhood Association gardens



Soul Garden, North Point Douglas



Charleswood Garden Club community gardens

Food and Farming in a Climate Emergency event

In November, the Winnipeg Food Council participated in a discussion about food, agriculture and climate change in Manitoba. The event was organized and hosted by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba office, Manitoba Eco-Network, the National Farmers Union, Manitoba's Climate Action Team, and the Winnipeg Food Council.

As one of the presenters, our Coordinator spoke about the importance of regional food systems and robust supply chains for feeding cities and creating resilience in the face of climate change. Over the last few years, new programs have started in Winnipeg to address the gap between the cost of locally and sustainably grown food and the financial reality of those facing household food insecurity. This is especially important in Winnipeg where, according to Winnipeg Regional Health Authority data, 10.2% of households experience food insecurity each year.

The Manitoba Community Food Currency Program run by Direct Farm Manitoba, the Food Accessibility Program from Fresh Roots Farm, the Solidarity Shares and sliding scale CSA pricing model of Heart Acres Farm, the Waste-Not local food box program by Fireweed Food Co-op, and our own Meadowood Victory Garden good food box program are all examples of recent actions in Manitoba to make sustainably produced food accessible to all. While these programs are helping to fill the gap, our Coordinator noted that policy solutions are required in this area.





Far left: Event presenters and moderator on screen for the Food and Farming in a Climate Emergency event.
Top row: Molly McCraken, CCPA Manitoba; Jeanette Sivilay, Winnipeg Food Council.
Bottom row: Darrin Qualman, NFU; Amber McNish, Borderland Agriculture

Close left: Promotional materials for the November 19 event.

2020 Financial Statement

Revenues:	**2020 Budget**	**2020 Actual**	**Balance**
Council Funding	$50,000.00	$50,000.00	
Total:	$50,000.00	$50,000.00	
Expenditures:			
Coordinator Contract Fee	$50,000.00	$50,000.00	
Total:	$50,000.00	$50,000.00	$ --

The Winnipeg Food Council is an ad hoc committee of the City of Winnipeg and does not have a budget comparable to other citizen advisory committees. The committee does have a Chair budget to be used for Food Council activities, at the Chair's discretion.

Contact Information

Jeanette Sivilay
Food Council Coordinator
204-891-5407

Karin Kliewer
Public Service Liaison
204-986-8635

Committee Mandate

The Food Council's function is to:

- Advise the mayor and Council on food system related issues
- Support the work of the community on food issues, enhance public health and local food security, and increase food literacy and access to food by encouraging multi-sector and strategic approaches, fostering coordination and networking, and supporting ongoing consultation
- Initiate the development of and support the implementation, maintenance and evaluation of a City of Winnipeg Agricultural and Food Strategy to address municipal food security and food system issues.