



## VANCOUVER CANADA

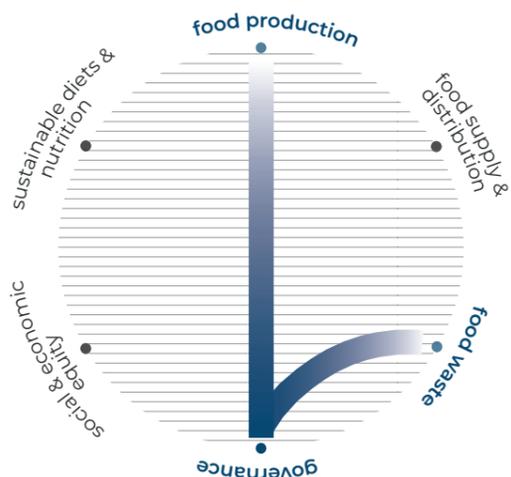
Title of Practice

### VANCOUVER: A FOOD STRATEGY AT COMMUNITY SCALE

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Category GOVERNANCE



Main impacts on other MUFPP categories



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#### Context

Since 2003, the City of Vancouver has been working to support a just and sustainable food system. This commitment builds on food systems initiatives and **grassroots community development** that dates back decades in the city and its province. In January 2013, the City Council adopted the **Vancouver Food Strategy**, an official plan that integrates a full spectrum of urban food system issues within a single **policy framework**, including food production, processing, distribution, access and waste management. The results are more far-reaching than stand-alone food policies, and more in keeping with a systemic approach to urban planning and development that aims to increase social, economic, environmental and health outcomes. Based on the Food Strategy successes, in 2017, the Action Plan was revised and updated to ensure it remains flexible with current food systems issues.

#### Overview of the food practice

The development of the Vancouver Food Strategy relied on a **preliminary consultation**, which involved approximately 2 200 individuals. A number of creative formats were used to gather feedback (e.g. roundtable discussions, workshops and focus groups, among others). The consultation phase involved ethno-culturally diverse communities and engaged socio-economically diverse, age-diverse, and harder-to-reach communities through storytelling, emphasizing collaboration and partnerships.

The **participatory dimension** has been a key aspect of the entire process at the basis of the Vancouver Food Strategy, which is composed by a vision and principles, five overarching goals and an action plan. The Strategy reflects a **holistic approach** to the food system, supporting businesses and social enterprises involved in processing and distribution of healthy, local and sustainable food and connect local agricultural producers in the region, increasing sustainable public procurement and reducing food waste. The City of Vancouver works collaboratively with many of its departments and community partners, non-profit and community organizations to implement the Vancouver Food Strategy action plan.

#### Results and lessons learned

The Vancouver Food Strategy created significant impacts on the ground in local communities in terms of **health and wellness** as well as **resilience and sustainability of the communities**. Its key policy achievements include:

- An increased number of food assets in the city including community garden plots, community orchards, farmers markets, and community kitchens from 3 340 in 2010 to 4 612 in 2016, a 38 percent increase.

percent increase.

- The realization of the **Community Food Market Guidelines** with a specific focus on increasing access to fresh, nutritious and affordable food in underserved communities. There are now 13 Community Food Markets offering food in neighbourhood across the city.
- An increased annual funding of USD 170 000 to support **Neighbourhood Food Networks** – coalitions of committed people focused on **food justice and resilience** at the neighbourhood level. In 2014, Neighbourhood Food Networks engaged with over 20 000 people.
- The implementation of food scraps/green waste pick up and banning all food waste to landfill, resulting in a 370 438 tonnes of organics diverted from landfill in the first year.
- The adoption of the **Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Development** which has led directly to new food growing spaces, community kitchens and urban orchards incorporated into the design of new buildings.
- **The support to urban farming** through zoning and licence bylaw changes. There are 18 urban farms operating in 2016 with a target of increasing to 35 by 2020.

By taking a coordinated approach to the many roles the city can play in relation to food, the Food Strategy provides the platform to integrate different goals and actions to create new synergies. It continues to be a **powerful tool** for the city to meet its social, environmental, economic and health goals.

What sets the Vancouver Food Strategy apart is the systems approach from 'grow' to 'throw' and back again. As such, it integrates policy objectives in two key ways: 1) It integrates the multitude of food policy initiatives across the food system into one comprehensive **overarching document**. This ensures that a systemic view is taken to all actions, meaning impacts on each area of the food system and other systems are considered. 2) It aligns the City's food systems goals with broader **City policies and priorities**. In this way, the Food Strategy achieves more impactful goals, while adding value to City priorities that may not be directly food-related. It also integrates food system work into many city departments, diversifying the staff who can champion food issues within the city. In particular, since the adoption of the Vancouver Food Strategy, there has been a **cultural shift** among City staff in appreciating the role that food can play in city building. With the development and adoption of the Food Strategy, food issues have a higher profile and impact in relation to city decisions. This approach reveals the importance of treating the food system as a part of a broader set of priorities, instead of a stand-alone topic.



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COMMUNITY FOOD ASSETS IN THE CITY including community orchards, farmers markets and community kitchens



3 340 in 2010  
4 612 in 2016



38% increase



13 Community food markets



#### NEIGHBOURHOOD FOOD NETWORKS

"coalitions of committed people focused on food justice and resilience at the neighbourhood level engaged with over 20 000 people in 2014"



- <https://bit.ly/2EJISbb> - LINK TO FOOD STRATEGY -  
- <https://bit.ly/1REcTNM> - LINK TO FOOD STRATEGY VIDEO -