

Why do we need a Food Charter?

Our health depends on the food we eat. Many people in Hamilton suffer from ill health because of a poor diet. Rates of heart disease, diabetes, cancer and obesity are too high in our City.

Our current food system is not sustainable. In recent years, Hamilton has lost both farmland and farmers who produce our food. We lack processing facilities for local food, rely heavily on imported food, and depend on a limited fossil fuel supply.

Those who work in the food system but do not get adequate wages, such as many farmers and migrant workers, can be viewed as marginalized.

Some members of our community cannot access healthy food because of low income, high cost, or poor food skills.

Let's talk about food

Hamilton's Food Charter will get people talking about food and food systems. It can help shape City policies and can be acted on by all in the community.

This Food Charter expresses our vision for how our food system can promote health, protect the environment, and eliminate hunger - not just for today, but for future generations.



This Charter was prepared by:
Community organizations and individuals coordinated by the Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee – an advisory committee to the Board of Health in Hamilton.

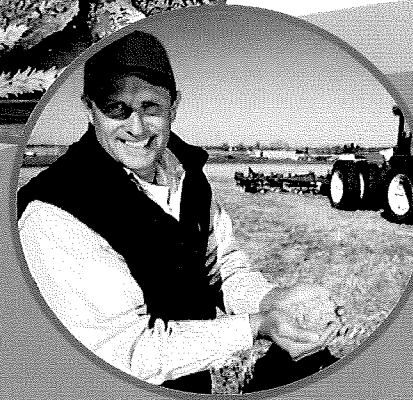
For more information visit:
hamiltonfoodcharter.wordpress.com
Please send comments to:
hamiltonfoodcharter@gmail.com

Definitions

A **charter** is a vision of values, principles, and priorities.

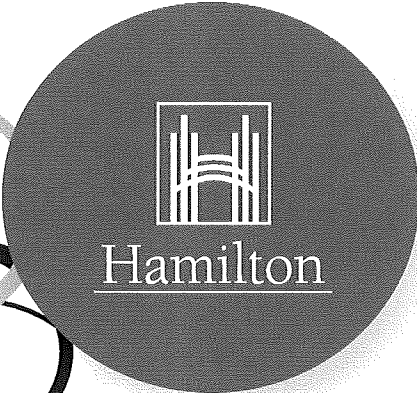
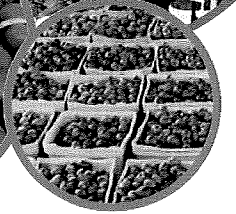
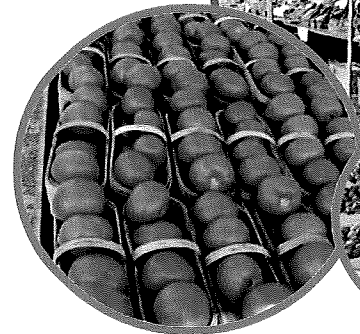
A **food system** is the complex set of activities and relationships in the food cycle (growing, producing, processing, distributing, marketing, retailing, storing, preparing, consuming and disposing).

The most commonly used definition of **sustainable development** comes from the Brundtland Commission of the United Nations: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."



FOOD IS FIRST

A Food Charter for Hamilton



Hamilton's Food Charter

Our Vision

Hamilton's Food Charter envisions a healthy, sustainable and just food system. It seeks to guide municipal policies and community action.

We will work to make the vision a reality based on the principles set out below.

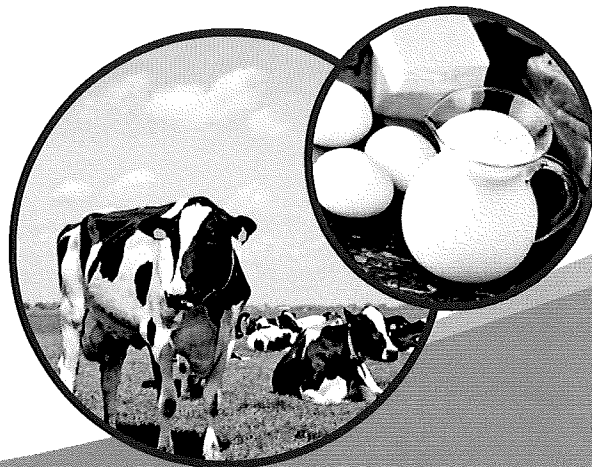
Strategic Principles

1. A Healthy Food System will:

- Enable the overall health and well-being of Hamiltonians
- Help to reduce the risks of chronic diseases
- Reduce the risk of food-borne illness
- Allow for nutritious and personally acceptable foods in all places where food is available, including home, workplace, school, retail settings, community centres, entertainment complexes, etc.

2. A Sustainable Food System will:

- Secure the economic viability of the Hamilton food sector for producers, processors, distributors, retailers and consumers, and provide jobs that pay a living wage
- Preserve and protect Hamilton farmland, watersheds, wildlife habitat, and the genetic diversity of food
- Allow for the development of urban agriculture
- Use processes at every stage of the food system that sustain or enhance the natural environment in both rural and urban settings
- Lessen the impact of variations in food supply
- Celebrate food that is grown here



3. A Just Food System will:

- Provide opportunities for all residents to acquire safe, nutritious, and personally acceptable food
- Give a voice to people marginalized by the present system
- Appreciate the value of food and farmers
- Support a living wage economy to allow everyone to buy food



Education is Key

Education about food and food systems is important. It will form an integral part of programs and policies developed as a result of this Charter.

This Charter will support initiatives that develop food knowledge and skills over the entire food system from growing to harvesting, buying, storing, cooking, eating and disposing of food.

