

Food for All

A Food Charter for Hamilton

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. Hamilton lacks processing facilities for local food, relies heavily on imported food, and depends on a limited fossil fuel supply.

The Food Charter will raise awareness about farm income, fair food prices and low paying jobs in the food industry.

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

Let's talk about food

This food charter is a statement of values and principles to guide food policy. People from a wide range of community interests and organizations met and discussed their concerns and desires around food and agriculture policy in order to come up with this common vision and set of principles. The vision and principles form the basis of Hamilton's own unique, local, community food charter. It is a public document to guide municipal decision making and community action.



This Charter was developed by:
the Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee – an advisory committee to the Board of Health in Hamilton.

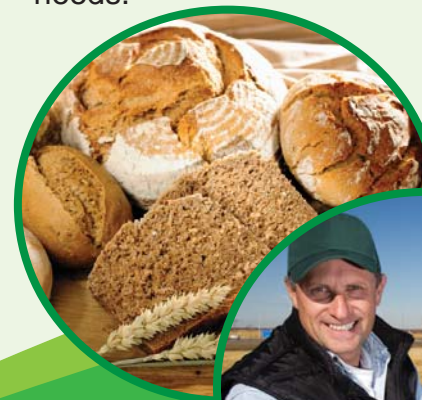
For more information visit:
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Definitions

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

The term “**food system**” refers to all of the processes which are part of providing food to people. It includes the growing, harvesting, transporting, processing, marketing, selling, consuming, and disposing of food.

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.”



Hamilton's Food Charter

Vision

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

Hamilton will 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
- Lower the risk of chronic diseases
- Reduce the risk of food-borne illness
- Allow for nutritious and personally acceptable foods in all places where food is available, such as home, workplace, school, retail settings, community centres, and entertainment complexes

2. A Sustainable Food System will:

- Ensure the economic viability of the Hamilton food sector for producers, processors, distributors, and retailers
- Preserve and protect Hamilton farmland, watersheds, and the species diversity of animal, plant and seed stock
- Allow for the development of urban agriculture
- Use processes that sustain or enhance the natural environment in both rural and urban settings at every stage of the food system
- Lessen the impact of variations in food supply
- Celebrate food that is grown locally

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 food system
- Reflect the real cost of food production
- 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.

