

City of Hamilton Food Advisory Committee
Recommendations to City Staff
On Implementing Priority Action #1 of the Hamilton Food Strategy
May 10, 2017

Overview: The Food Advisory Committee is a citizen advisory committee within the City of Hamilton. The purpose of the Committee is to advise city stakeholders (in particular, elected officials and City staff) on food issues and support the implementation of the Food Strategy and its vision to create a Hamilton “with a sustainable food system where all people at all times have economic and physical access to enough safe, nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences.”

The following is a list of recommendations to City of Hamilton staff in order to enact Priority Action #1 of the Food Strategy:

“Create a formal, transparent process for requests for municipal funding for community food programs as they arise at any City of Hamilton subcommittee meeting, or by Council via Council motions, delegations, or staff direction.”

This proposal is the result of several subcommittee and committee meetings in which members provided feedback based on their expertise and experience with various funding models. This list of recommendations seeks to address key concerns about transparency and the efficient allocation of City resources as well as opportunities to create a fair, flexible and impactful funding request process.

Recommendation #1:

The Food Advisory Committee recommends that an evaluation criteria is developed in order to fairly judge requests for monetary support from the City and promote transparency.

Recommendation #2:

The following is a list of key considerations that the Food Advisory Committee felt should be *included* in the evaluation criteria:

- Forecasted impact on Hamilton community
- Connection to City priorities (including the Food Strategy)
- Project feasibility
- Transferability and scalability
- The availability of matching funds
- Joint requests from multiple project partners
- Fiscal sustainability
- Applicants’ proven track record of success
- Ability to measure and report back on community impact
- Explanation of why the applicant is applying outside of the City Enrichment Fund or other City grant/funding opportunities
- Explanation of how the proposed project/activity will benefit the citizens of Hamilton
- Explanation of how the proposed project/activity aligns with the City’s Food Strategy and Strategic Plan
- Applicants must describe if they have previously applied to the City Enrichment Fund and/or other municipal grant/funding sources and were they un/successful

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Recommendation #3:

The following is a list of key considerations that the Food Advisory Committee felt should be *excluded* from the evaluation criteria:

- Timeline restrictions (allow for multi-year asks)
- Restrictions on the type of organization that can apply (i.e. businesses, non-profits, charities, co-ops, etc. can all be included)
- Restrictions on funding for operating costs (allow operating/overhead costs to be funded)
- Restrictions on the ability of new organizations to apply

Recommendation #4:

Applicants should provide a forecasted impact on City staff resources, recognizing that requests for funding often require City staff to provide essential project implementation and evaluation supports.

Recommendation #5:

The criteria must be clearly communicated to City of Hamilton staff, councillors, and councillors' staff in order to be widely adopted and used.

Recommendation #6:

The evaluation criteria should be made available to applicants making requests so that they can understand how their request is being vetted.

Recommendation #7:

Once the request is evaluated, applicants should receive a copy of the completed evaluation so applicants can understand why their request was accepted/rejected.

Recommendation #8:

The City should update its approach to communicating the City Enrichment Fund and other granting opportunities. Information sessions, links to funding on councillors' websites, and clearer advertising of City Enrichment-supported projects may reduce the number of requests directed outside of established funding streams.

Recommendation #9:

All successful projects should be required to submit a report/project update annually to communicate how city funds are being used and the beneficial impact to the citizens of Hamilton.

Recommendation #10:

One year after implementation, City Staff should review the evaluation process to gauge its success and ascertain whether or not changes need to be made to the process. One change may include moving from a checklist to a rubric in which weights are assigned to each evaluation criterion.