



Executive Summary

JustFOOD

Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART B - DECEMBER 2023

HALIFAX



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Acknowledgements

Land Acknowledgement

The meetings, work, and envisioned goals of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* take place on the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq First Nation.

We make this land acknowledgement to recognize Indigenous claims to unceded territory and Indigenous lineages of agriculture, which directly uses the land for food. We do so in order to express respect to the land and elders who were here before us and to acknowledge the critical importance of consciously working towards reconciliation in our work. Indigenous Peoples were growing, harvesting, hunting, fishing, and collecting food in a healthy, sustainable, and just way for generations before colonization. We specifically acknowledge the Mi'kmaq for their continued stewardship of the land.

This acknowledgement challenges us to ask questions that bear directly on this project, such as: how to link to Mi'kmaq governance, what is the role of treaty, and what implications does this work have for the land and sea that local food comes from?

In mainstream settler culture, it is easy to forget how our region nourishes us. As we consider how to increase access to food and strengthen the food system, we must uplift Indigenous voices and center Indigenous wisdom and values of ecological health, social justice, and food sovereignty.



Maps: 2023 North American Indigenous Games



Acknowledgements

The *JustFOOD Action Plan* was developed with input from municipal and provincial governments, community partner organizations, and HRM residents who generously shared their wisdom and experiences. In particular, we are grateful for the contributions of the African Nova Scotian and Black Food Sovereignty and Justice Working Group, the Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Justice Working Group, and No One Is Illegal - Halifax/Kjipuktuk.

We give special thanks to members of the JustFOOD team, including:

- Leticia Smillie, Project Manager – Halifax Regional Municipality
- Vicki Madziak, Caitlin Skerratt, and More Vail – Ecology Action Centre
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Introduction

Strategies to Advance Year One Priority Recommendations

On March 7th, 2023, [Halifax Regional Council endorsed Part A](#) of the JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region. Part A sets the stage for our regional food system, captures public engagement findings, and establishes 56 recommendations for positive food system change. At this time, Regional Council also directed Mayor Savage to make HRM a signatory to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), an international protocol aimed at tackling food-related issues at the municipal level. The Principles of Part A, based on the [MUFPP Framework for Action](#), establish the foundations of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*.

Part A established key next steps for implementation:

- **Establish JustFOOD Working Groups**
- **Develop Implementation Strategies and Formalize Commitments**
- **Form a Food Policy Council (Halifax Food Council)**
- **Monitor Progress**

Part B is a practical document, presenting the **Implementation Strategies** that will be used to advance the In Progress and Year One priority recommendations identified in Part A. The Implementation Strategies outline the steps to advance the recommendations; confirm roles of key leads and partners; establish outcomes and performance measures; and articulate resourcing and budget requirements, including a 2024/25 Municipal budget request for some. The Implementation Strategies are designed to increase the capacity of Municipal staff and communities to advance food action beyond the initiative, expanding impact through provision of training, food literacy supports, and tools to support ongoing food action.

Many Implementation Strategies were developed in partnership with community, including the Indigenous Working Group (internal to the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre), the African Nova Scotian and Black (ANSB) Working Group, and No One Is Illegal – Nova Scotia.

Areas of Work

Part B Implementation Strategies increase collective capacity for action through six “buckets of work”:

Formalizing Governance & Establishing Community Food Grants

Growing Municipal Capacity for Action

Maximizing Municipal Assets for Food Access, Production, & Literacy

Understanding Food Resources & Community Vulnerabilities







Strengthening Emergency Food Planning & Responses

Collaborating Towards Food System Change

The following image highlights the major Year One initiatives that fall under each bucket of work. While placed under a bucket of work, initiatives overlap and advance the other areas of work towards the broader objective of a more healthy, just, and resilient food system for our region.

JUSTFOOD HALIFAX PART B

IMPLEMENTATION OF YEAR 1 & IN PROGRESS PRIORITIES

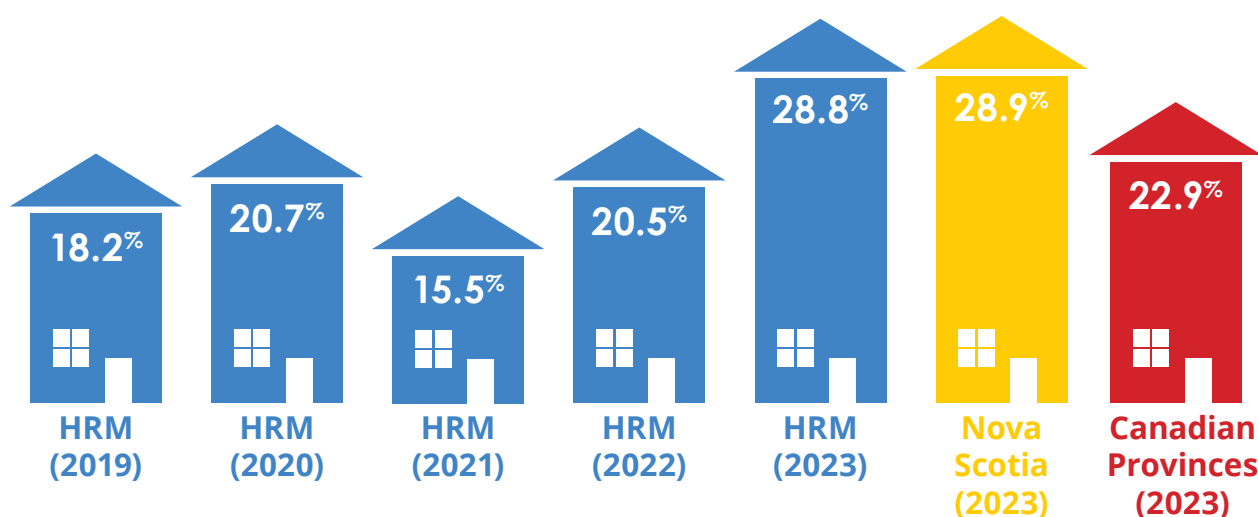
 FORMALIZING GOVERNANCE & ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY GRANT	 GROWING MUNICIPAL CAPACITY FOR ACTION	 MAXIMIZING MUNICIPAL ASSETS FOR FOOD ACCESS, PRODUCTION, & LITERACY	 UNDERSTANDING FOOD RESOURCES & COMMUNITY VULNERABILITIES	 STRENGTHENING EMERGENCY FOOD PLANNING	 COLLABORATING TOWARDS FOOD SYSTEM CHANGE
<p>Stand-up Halifax Food Council (EAC fledge) to oversee JustFOOD</p> <p>Resource HFC: 2FTE & Funds for operating and community participation</p> <p>Establish Community Food Grants</p> <p>Fund ANSB FTE, Advisory & Pilots</p> <p>Fund Indigenous FTE & Advisory</p> <p>Expand Virtual Food Hub</p> <p>Progress Monitoring Framework</p>	<p>Grow municipal food team to 4 FTE (+ urban ag specialist, emergency food, & food specialist)</p> <p>Build capacity & food lens through municipal working group(s)</p> <p>Collaborate with Parks& Rec, Planning, SolidWaste, Environment & Climate Change, EMO, Horticulture, IT, Corp Comms, & other departments</p>	<p>Fund & resource new Community Plots & existing Community Gardens Programs</p> <p>Launch Community Orchard & Vermicompost Pilots</p> <p>Create directory of municipal sites for food distribution</p> <p>Launch backyard sharing matchmaking program and land sharing resources</p>	<p>Advance the Halifax Food Asset Map</p> <p>Work with Municipal & community partners (Public Safety, HalifACT, Planning, United Way, FeedNS, Province, Public Health, and others) to better understand community vulnerabilities & inequities</p>	<p>Hire Food Truck Coordinator</p> <p>Work with Second Harvest to match supply with demand & maximize emergency food truck for Community Food Distribution Pilot</p> <p>Advance Community Food Partner agreements</p> <p>Advance Emergency Food Playbook</p> <p>Explore Connection between Food & Climate</p>	<p>Outreach to NS Food & Beverage Strategy leadership</p> <p>Tap into Milan Urban Food Policy Pact</p> <p>Support Regional Food Hub</p> <p>Partner with FeedNS for Social Supermarket & Rural Food Pilots</p> <p>Partner with NOII to support migrant workers</p> <p>Continue support for Mobile Food Market</p> <p>Advocate for income supports & universal school food</p>

Food Insecurity in HRM

Part B advances actions and initiatives to strengthen our food system. **However, we must also acknowledge that increased advocacy and action is essential to address inadequate income, the root cause of food insecurity.** Since the publication of Part A, rising costs of living have continued to outpace incomes, and more residents are living with food insecurity. The percentage of people in our Region living in food insecure households dramatically increased to 28.8% in 2023, indicating that more than one in four households or, conservatively, as many as 125,000 HRM residents are food insecure¹.

The infographic below shows a brief decrease in household food insecurity to 15.5% in 2021, likely due to the short-term, protective impact of COVID-19 income supports². Research continues to demonstrate that access to secure and adequate income is the one intervention that consistently reduces rates of food insecurity³. Conversely, research examining the impact of charitable responses to food insecurity, such as food banks, has demonstrated that while they offer temporary access to food, they are often not serving the most food insecure and do not address the root causes of household food insecurity⁴.

PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS LIVING IN FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS



¹ References: Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey (CIS) 2018-2022. Custom Tables for Halifax Census Metropolitan Area. PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research. "New Data on household food insecurity in 2023." Retrieved from: <https://proof.utoronto.ca/2024/new-data-on-household-food-insecurity-in-2023/> Note: To align with PROOF's reporting methods and to reflect the year of CIS data collection, we've labeled the data using the year it was collected. CIS data on food insecurity are collected in the year following the survey reference year.

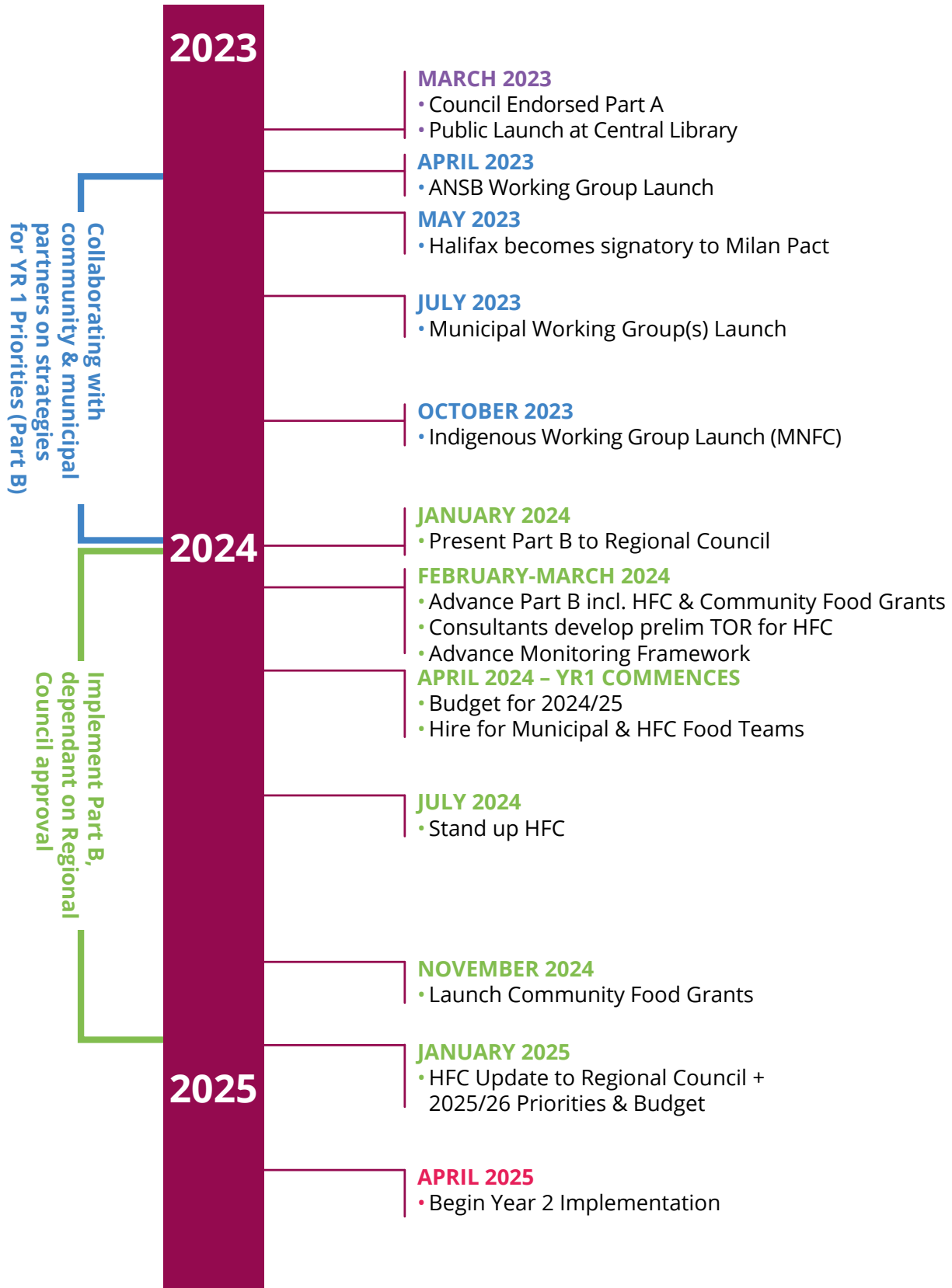
² Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. "Living Wages in Nova Scotia 2022. Working for a Living. Not Living to Work," 2022. <https://policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Nova%20Scotia%20Office/2022/09/livingwagesinns2022final.pdf>

³ PROOF. What Can be Done to Reduce Food Insecurity in Canada? Accessed December 2023. <https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/what-can-be-done-to-reduce-food-insecurity-in-canada/>

⁴ Food First Newfoundland and Labrador. 2023. "Rethinking Food Charity". <https://www.foodfirstnl.ca/rethinking-food-charity>

Timeline

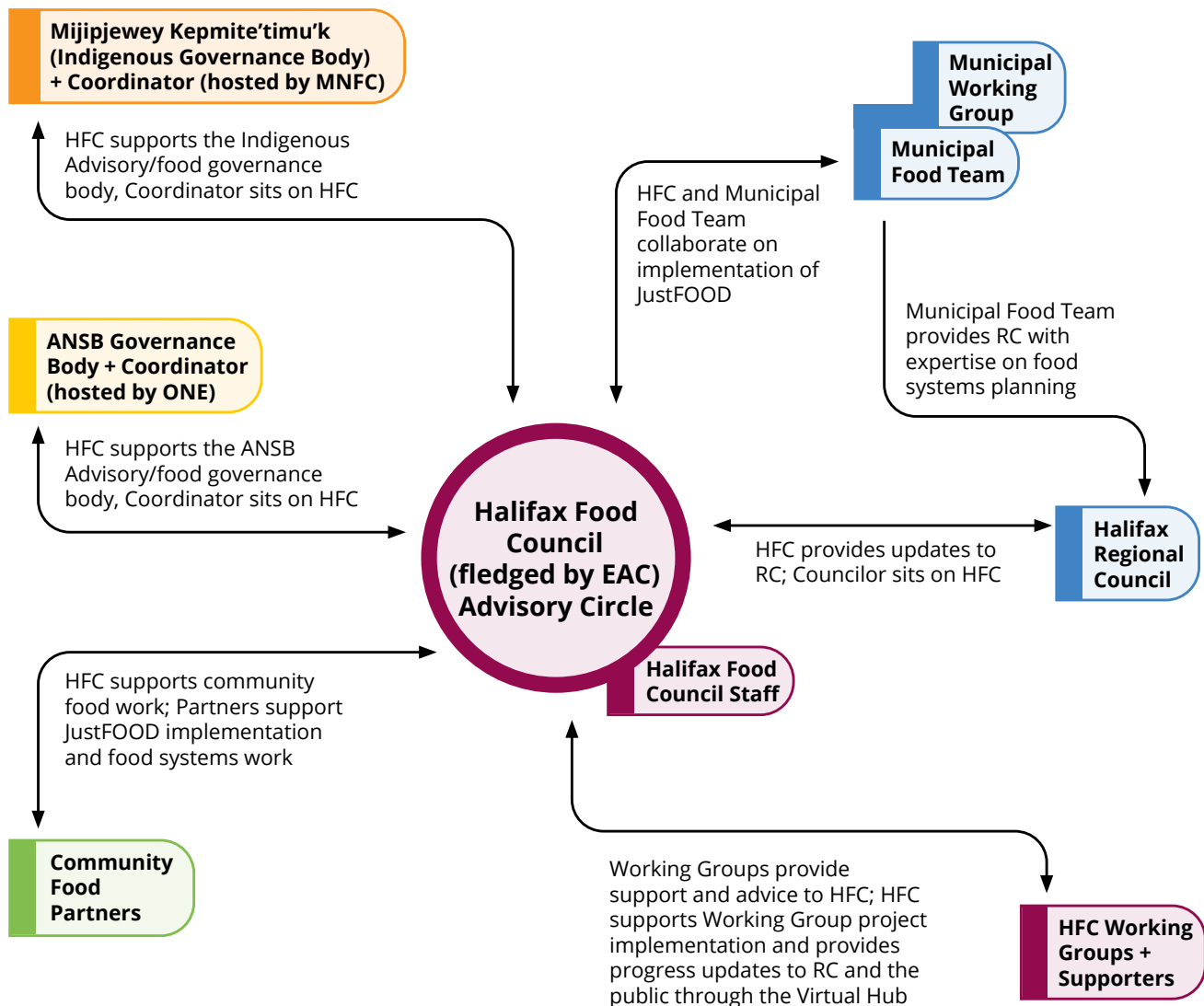
This timeline outlines the steps that have already been or will be completed between March 2023 (Council’s endorsement of Part A) and April 2025 (covering the first year of Plan implementation).



Establishment of Governance Bodies

The success of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* continues to depend on collective action and collaboration across governments, communities, businesses, and organizations. Part B proposes **four main governance bodies** that will work together to implement, monitor, and connect the *JustFOOD Action Plan* to Halifax Regional Council, Plan partners, and the broader community:

1. Halifax Food Council (HFC);
2. Municipal Food Team;
3. African Nova Scotian and Black Food Governance Body; and
4. Indigenous Food Governance Body.



Halifax Food Council

A key step in advancing the *JustFOOD Action Plan* recommendations is the establishment of an independent, funded, and staffed food council to replace the Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA).

The Halifax Food Council (HFC) and its associated **Advisory Circle** will lead collective action across sectors, oversee the implementation and monitoring of the Plan, and establish a grant program to support community-based food initiatives that advance JustFOOD Action Plan priorities. The HFC will also share tools and research to support community-led food action through the new Virtual Community Food Hub (Implementation Strategies **IS 1, 1b.i, 5, 9d**).

Municipal Food Team

The creation of a Municipal Food Team will increase Municipal capacity for collaboration and food action. The Municipal Food Team will work to maximize Municipal resources, strengthen emergency food responses, increase our understanding of community vulnerabilities and food resources, and support the implementation of Municipally-led recommendations. The Team will build Municipal knowledge and capacity to support food systems planning, urban agriculture, food and climate initiatives, and emergency food planning (**IS 6a, 17, 32, 45b, 45b.ii, 56b**). The Team will also work directly with the HFC to advance the implementation of the *JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan*.

ANSB and Indigenous Food Governance Bodies

The *JustFOOD Action Plan* continues to support food sovereignty and justice efforts across the region. Part B proposes the establishment of Indigenous and ANSB food governance bodies that operate independently from but in collaboration with the HFC. The Implementation Strategies (**IS 22, 29b**) include support for the addition of an Indigenous Food Coordinator and the establishment of an Indigenous food governance body as well as for the addition of an ANSB Food Coordinator, and the establishment of an ANSB food governance body.

Next Steps


Part B establishes the governance structure, partnerships, initiatives, resources, and monitoring framework required to support ongoing implementation of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* and progression of Year One priority recommendations. The [Timeline](#) outlines the next steps for Year One (2024/25) of the Plan. Future updates on the progression of the Plan and advancement of priority *JustFOOD* recommendations will be led by the HFC, in consultation with other governance bodies and Plan partners. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact [suite of indicators](#) form the backbone of the new ***JustFOOD Halifax Monitoring Framework*** (**IS 9d**). The Virtual Community Food Hub, HFC reports, annual updates to Halifax Regional Council, and the 5 year Plan review (2027/28) will all provide transparent and consistent communication on the progress of the *JustFOOD Action Plan* for the Halifax Region.

Summary Table

Y1 = Actions to be progressed during YEAR ONE of Plan implementation

 = Completion of a YEAR ONE Recommendation

IP = Actions that were IN PROGRESS, to be further advanced during YEAR ONE

 = Emerging Opportunity

RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATIONS			
Y1	1. Establish and fund a Food Council. IS 1	The Halifax Food Council (HFC) will replace and expand the work of Halifax Food Policy Alliance (HFPA), within a fledgling organization (Ecology Action Centre) to reduce administrative burdens and allow for exploration of benefits of legal incorporation. The HFC Advisory Circle will coordinate collective action for positive change; increase and center community participation in governance; support and fund community-based food initiatives; advise governments, institutions, and others; and guide and evaluate the implementation of the JustFOOD Action Plan. The HFC will establish a collaborative governance space and resources to support the identification and realization of shared goals for the regional food system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire and collaborate with consultant(s) to develop governance relationship, legal terms, and financial mechanisms between HFC and EAC • Advance Advisory Circle TOR • Formalize partnership between the HFC, EAC, and HRM • Integrate (1) Indigenous and (2) ANSB food governance models • Establish Advisory Circle and hire HFC staff Fledge and resource the Halifax Food Council, through EAC, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant, lawyer and financial advisor fees • 2 FTEs • Supplies & expenses • Advisory circles, honorariums, engagement • Virtual Food Hub Total Budget: \$282,399.73 Municipal 2024/25 Ask: \$251,493.48
Y1	1b.i. Develop a sustainable funding stream operated by the Food Council. IS 1b.i	The Community Food Grants Program is an independent, arms-length funding stream (administered by the HFC) to support community-based organizations and grassroots initiatives that advance and align with the JustFOOD Action Plan. The Program will reduce application barriers, support program evaluation, and prioritize under-served communities.	Upon establishment of the HFC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop eligibility criteria, priority objectives, and evaluation frameworks • Create supports for application, evaluation, & capacity building • Launch and evaluate Program Establish funds for Community Food Grants and resources to support applications & build capacity. Total Budget: \$185,718.75 Municipal 2024/25 Ask: \$185,718.75
Y1	2. Indigenous & ANSB Food Governance Bodies and associated funding IS 22 & 29b	See Recommendations 22 and 23e for details on the Indigenous Advisory and Coordinator See Recommendations 29 and 29b for details on the ANSB Advisory, Coordinator, and Pilots	

RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
<p>IP 3a. Continue creating an enabling municipal environment for good food.</p> <p>IS 6a, 17, 32, 33d, 45b, 45b.ii, & 56b</p>	<p>A four member Municipal Food Team will be established to build the necessary capacity to deliver municipally- led <i>JustFOOD</i> recommendations and bring a food system lens to municipal initiatives including planning, policies, practices and infrastructure.</p> <p>See Recommendations 6a, 17, 32, 33d, 45b, 45b.ii, and 56b for details on municipally-led recommendations and new roles to support their delivery.</p>		
<p>IP 4b. Continue to advocate for collaboration across municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government, and with Indigenous nations.</p>	<p>Continue to seek to align development and implementation of the <i>JustFOOD Action Plan</i> with Provincial-level efforts, such as the forthcoming <i>Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy</i>. The HFPA played an active role during the consultation for this strategy. Many themes and priorities from Part A of the JustFOOD Action Plan are reflected in the Provincial "What We Heard" report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HFC and the Municipality will continue to engage with the Province as they advance the <i>Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy</i>, seeking opportunities for collaboration and amplification where possible. 	<p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p>Municipal 2024/25 Ask: \$0.00</p>
<p>Y1 5. Create a virtual community food hub.</p> <p>IS 5</p>	<p>The Virtual Community Food Hub will share resources, programs, funding opportunities and research to support community food action. The Hub will report on the progress of the JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan. It will be the home of the Halifax Food Council, the Community Food Grants, and a place to connect with other community food actors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand justfoodhalifax.ca into the Virtual Food Hub • Develop "home" for the HFC and Community Food Grants • Create platform to report on progress of JustFOOD • Update existing tools, link to resources (Food Asset Map), and create new supports like events calendar, researcher profiles, fora, etc. 	<p>Web and graphic designer.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$1,389.98.</p> <p>Municipal 2024/25 Ask: \$0.00, included as part of the HFC Budget (IS 1, Rec 1).</p>
<p>IP 6a. Develop the HRM Food Asset Map.</p> <p>IS 6a</p>	<p>The HRM Food Asset Map is a visual, geographic database of food resources in the Halifax Region. The Map will be a communal, open data resource to increase understanding of the regional food system; enable the tracking of changes over time; and support data collection and analysis to identify community vulnerabilities and strengths.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress research partnerships • Procure consultant to progress Food Asset Framework and ID & incorporate datasets • Establish protocols for data management • Create public interface, test & refine 	<p>Data consultant and training in food asset mapping</p> <p>Total Budget: \$25,300.00</p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/25): \$25,300.00</p>




RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
<p>✓ 8. Pursue membership in Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP).</p>	<p>Halifax Regional Municipality became a signatory city to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) in May, 2023. The HFPA is in regular contact with MUFPP representatives and continues to use MUFPP resources to inform the development of food system monitoring tools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain contact with MUFPP representatives and review training tools and supports as available • Continue to use the MUFPP framework to support the JustFOOD Halifax Monitoring Framework 	<p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</p>
<p>Y1 9d. Use key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate Plan progress.</p> <p>IS 9d</p>	<p>The <i>JustFOOD Action Plan</i> requires a robust Monitoring Framework to evaluate progress and impact over time, inform revisions, and guide strategic adjustments. The Monitoring Framework establishes 29 indicators adapted from the <i>Milan Urban Food Policy Pact</i> to be reported on annually by the HFC to gauge the state of the regional food system, measure <i>JustFOOD</i> progress, and track food system action or changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop data collection, analysis, and sharing plans • Develop reporting plans to communicate key findings and changes over time 	<p>Open data platform and reporting on monitoring framework and evaluation of performance indicators</p> <p>Total Budget: \$0.00; included in the HFC Budget (IS 1, Rec 1)</p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</p>
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY RECOMMENDATIONS			
<p>IP 11. Develop programs and resources that address the rising cost of food in collaboration with the Province, academic institutions, and other partners.</p> <p>ES 11</p>	<p>The Feed Nova Scotia Innovation and Learning Lab is progressing additional <i>JustFOOD Action Plan</i> recommendations, including the advancement of a Social Supermarket Pilot and a Rural Food Access Pilot, both of which will promote affordable and dignified access to food.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct community engagement for both Pilots • Establish partnerships with community food actors • Implement and evaluate Pilots 	<p>Budgets for both Pilots will be determined through the design process, with FeedNS committing up to \$170,000 to support implementation.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$170,000.00</p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</p>
<p>Y1 12e and 12e.i. Collaborate... to provide easily accessible social services to migrant workers in agriculture and develop multiple-language information packages to share with workers.</p> <p>IS 12e, 12e.i</p>	<p>No One Is Illegal-NS were key advisers for JustFOOD Part A recommendations, developed in consultation with migrant workers across Nova Scotia. NOII-NS has designed two Pilots to reduce the barriers workers face in accessing critical services and resources, easing their transition into working and living in our Region: English for Migrant Workers (EMW) Pilot and Welcome Bags Pilot.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare materials and recruit staff • Engage with workers in HRM on both Pilots • Deliver and evaluate Pilots 	<p>No One Is Illegal (NOII) - NS Pilots: Welcome Bags & English Classes.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$42,032.90</p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$42,032.90</p>

RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
<p>IP 15a. Promote participatory education, training, and research.</p> <p>IS 1b.i, 5, 6a, 9d, 12e, 12e.i, 17, 29, 32, 33d, & 56b</p>	<p>Fostering participatory education, training and research is incorporated into many of the Implementation Strategies, which include programs and funding to support community capacity building, knowledge sharing, and engagement.</p> <p>See Recommendations 1b.i, 5, 6a, 9d, 12e, 12e.i, 17, 29, 32, 33d, and 56b for more details.</p>		
<p>Y1 17. Use municipal facilities and assets to offer food programs, grow food, and support public food infrastructure.</p> <p>IS 17</p>	<p>The Community Orchard Pilot supports the integration and maximization of Municipal assets for food demonstration, production, access, and literacy by planting fruit/nut trees on centrally located, well-accessed Municipal land. The Pilot is an opportunity for HRM to expand and revitalize the Leighton Dillman Community Orchard and build community capacity for tree planting and care through training & literacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize and host training opportunities on planting and caring for trees • Develop and execute maintenance plan • Install interpretive signage, prepare site, plant trees • Evaluate impact and explore expansion to other site(s) 	<p>Community Orchard Pilot: supplies, labour, and training.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$8,840.00</p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$8,840.00</p>
<p>Y1 22 and 23e. Establish and fund an Indigenous food-governance model. Fund a full-time food coordinator position at the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC)</p> <p>IS 22 & 23e</p>	<p>The creation of an Indigenous Food Coordinator role and the advancement of an Indigenous food governance body will support Indigenous food sovereignty, justice, and security efforts across the Region. They will work with the HFC to promote collaboration and mutual support between Indigenous and settler communities, centering indigenous perspectives and approaches in the progression of <i>JustFOOD</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire the Coordinator through the MNFC • Develop ways to collaborate & mutually support between HFC, Municipal Food Team, and Indigenous Coordinator & Mijipjewey Kepmite'timu'k (Indigenous Food Governance Body) • ID priority projects & JustFOOD recommendations 	<p>Indigenous Coordinator, Advisory Group through MNFC:</p> <p>Total Budget: \$80,080</p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$52,584</p>
<p>Y1 29. Support the development of an ANSB governance body. Develop community infrastructure and projects that create economic and social benefits in ANSB communities.</p> <p>IS 29</p>	<p>A full-time African Nova Scotian and Black (ANSB) Community Food Coordinator is required to build capacity towards an ANSB food governance body, deliver food sovereignty projects (Kaja Planters & Meal Prep Projects) and advance related JustFOOD recommendations. The centering of ANSB approaches and perspectives will be critical to the success of the Halifax Food Council (HFC) as a governing body committed to racial equity, food justice, and community power.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop job description, hire Coordinator through OneNorthEnd. • Establish project timelines and partnerships • Order materials and launch programs 	<p>ANSB Coordinator, Advisory Group, and pilot projects through OneNorthEnd.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$110,352.05</p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/25): \$105,491.05</p>

RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
FOOD PRODUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS			
<p>Y1</p> <p>32.a.i. Enable and fund the development of a Community Plots Pilot.</p> <p>32.a.ii. Create and fund an Urban Agriculture Specialist staff position within the Municipality.</p> <p>32.a.vi. Establish a Community Garden Grant Program</p> <p>IS 32</p>	<p>The proposed Urban Agriculture Specialist (UAS) will support the expansion of HRM's Community Garden Program, new Community Garden Grants Program, and the development of additional Municipally-led urban agriculture programs, including the Community Plots Pilot, altogether increasing HRM's knowledge base and capacity to provide opportunities for community food production.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize job description & hire UAS • Identify sites, establish plots, create application process, and launch Community Plots Pilot • Develop TOR and supports for application and performance measurement • Launch and evaluate impact, need, and opportunities for Community Garden Grants 	<p>UAS role & Food Program Funds; Community Plots Pilot; Community Gardens Grant Program</p> <p>Total Budget: \$184,400.00</p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/25): \$184,400.00</p>
<p>IP</p> <p>33d. Work with partner organizations to develop a backyard sharing program.</p> <p>ES 33</p>	<p>Throughout the development and implementation of the JustFOOD Action Plan, community members have identified a need and interest in greater access to low-barrier spaces for growing food. The Backyard Sharing Program will match residents that have available land with those who are seeking land for food production as well as guidance to establish a relationship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize Guidebook and template Agreements • Develop Platform, launch Program, and promote • Evaluate performance and explore opportunities for improvement 	<p>Platform of potential sites, matchmaking landholders & gardeners, & supports for relationship building.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p><i>Costs covered by food program funds, See Rec 32</i></p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</p>
FOOD SUPPLY, PROCESSING, AND DISTRIBUTION RECOMMENDATIONS			
<p>IP</p> <p>37. Assess the flow of food to and through HRM</p>	<p>The team continues to support research and seek opportunities to assess the flow of food into and throughout HRM. HRM and the HFFPA have collaborated with the National Zero Waste Council (NZWC) for the Circular Food Hubs Pilot (see 51a for more details). Data collection for the Pilot has increased understanding of where food loss/waste is happening across the food system. Once the Pilot is complete, the food flow analysis will be incorporated into JustFOOD research and advancement of this recommendation.</p>		
<p>Y1</p> <p>38d. Allow community food markets, food-distribution hubs, and stable community supported agriculture distribution sites in municipal spaces.</p>	<p>Work has begun to collaborate with HRM business units to create an inventory of municipal spaces that would be well suited for local food distribution. This work will include identification of opportunities, barriers, and relevant information about spaces that can be used to create a shareable dataset of potential sites for food distribution. This work will also be supported by the Food Asset Map (Rec. 6a)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage key municipal staff to further develop the inventory. • Explore opportunities to incorporate in the HRM Food Asset Map or create platform to share inventory 	<p>Inventory of Municipal Sites for food distribution, retail, etc.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</p>

RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
<p>IP 39a. Continue to support the development of the Halifax Regional Food Hub and provincially supported community food networks, creating centralized infrastructure to store, process, market, and distribute local food to serve HRM.</p> <p>IS 39a</p>	<p>The HFPA is a founding member of the Halifax Regional Food Hub Co-operative (Hub), working to establish centrally located infrastructure to connect food producers with wholesale buyers in the commercial, community, and institutional sectors. The Hub will offer facilities for aggregation, storage, online ordering, order fulfillment and delivery, and opportunities for co-marketing and promotion of local products. By supporting local producers, building local food infrastructure, and creating efficient channels for food distribution, the Hub will increase the Region's economic resiliency, food security, and food sovereignty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a manager to lead the standing up of the Hub • Establish a facility for local food aggregation, storage, marketing, processing, and distribution • Form co-op networks of small to medium mainland Nova Scotia food producers and HRM buyers • Expand market access for HRM-based nonprofits, institutions, and commercial buyers 	<p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</p> <p><i>It is anticipated that a funding or in-kind contribution ask will come to HRM in Fiscal 2024/25 as part of the projected \$1.5 million budget for year 1 operations. HRM business parks have been identified as ideal locations for the Hub.</i></p>
HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND RESILIENCE RECOMMENDATIONS			
<p>IP 43a. Address food insecurity's impact on community health... and advocate for income-based solutions.</p>	<p>The HFC and Municipal Food Team will continue to advocate across levels of government for income based solutions to household food insecurity, through consistently identifying income as the key determinant of household food insecurity. Collaboration and support will continue for Basic Income Now as they develop a municipal basic income advocacy toolkit. In June 2022, Halifax Regional Council passed a motion calling on the Government of Canada to implement a Guaranteed Livable Basic Income.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to advocate for the necessity of income based supports • Continue collaborating with all levels of government as well as local advocacy organizations such as Basic Income Now. 	<p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</p>

RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
<p>IP 45. Develop an emergency food plan with funding and resources for emergency responses.</p> <p>IS 45b</p>	<p>Partnerships are crucial to emergency response strategies, as community-level groups are uniquely attuned to needs, are trusted by communities, and can provide rapid, targeted assistance, ensuring that resources and support are directed where most needed. Work to advance the HRM Emergency Food Playbook has focused on establishing community interest in and capacity to support emergency food responses, through the Emergency Food Partners Survey. This will support EMO's emergency response tools, including the ongoing Hazard, Risk, & Vulnerability Assessment project and the SATURN (situational analysis and response) refresh.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase capacity and circulate Survey in additional communities and other potential partners • Negotiate Supplier Agreements with partners • Incorporate agreements and community partners into broader emergency response plans 	<p>Community Food & Climate Specialist, Emergency Food Partners Survey, and Emergency Food Playbook.</p> <p>Total Budget: \$83,000.00 <i>(covered by surplus from current Contribution Agreement with EAC)</i></p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</p>
<p>IP 45. Develop an emergency food program. Commit infrastructure for preparation and distribution of food supplies.</p> <p>IS 45b.ii.</p>	<p>The Community Food Distribution Pilot will maximize the HRM Emergency Food Truck to bring food into communities; distribute surplus food in partnership with Second Harvest; and support community food organizations in food acquisition and delivery. The new Emergency Food Truck Coordinator will use the Truck to support emergency responses, focusing community food distribution, preparation, and preservation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire Coordinator • Create Truck calendar and Agreements of Use • Launch and promote Pilot • Evaluate uptake and food rescue opportunities • Explore options for development of program 	<p>Truck Coordinator, Food Distribution Pilot, Second Harvest partnership, and Calendar</p> <p>Total Budget: \$63,381.00 <i>(accounted for in 2023/24 HRM Community Safety operational budget)</i></p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</p>
<p>IP 47. Work with the Coalition for Healthy School Food and the Province to advocate for universal healthy school food programs.</p>	<p>The HFC will continue to sit on the Coalition for Healthy School Food Nova Scotia Advisory Committee and Halifax Regional Council endorsed the Coalition's call for a universal, cost-shared, healthy school food program for Canada in MArch of 2022. A universal school food program would provide all students with access to a healthy breakfast and lunch during the school day. Current advocacy includes asking the federal government to provide \$1 billion over 5 years with an immediate investment of \$200 million in the 2024 budget and calling upon the Province to sign agreements as part of a pilot or readiness to implement phase.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support Coalition advocacy efforts. 	<p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</p>

RECOMMENDATION & STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024/2025	RESOURCES/BUDGET
FOOD WASTE RECOMMENDATIONS			
 <p>51. Convene food system actors to assess and monitor food loss and waste reduction across the food value chain</p> <p>ES 51a</p>	<p>HRM has partnered with the National Zero Waste Council, Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad (COIL), Halifax Food Policy Alliance, and the Halifax Partnership to advance the Circular Food Hubs: Mainland Nova Scotia Pilot. This Pilot is exploring circular food solutions that reduce food waste/loss, contribute to shorter supply chains, circulate resources, and regenerate natural systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results and final reports from Challenge due February 2024. • Last step of Pilot will be development of a roadmap towards a circular food hub or solution for mainland Nova Scotia 	<p>Total Budget: \$0.00</p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</p>
 <p>54. Promote recovery and redistribution of safe and nutritious foods</p> <p>IS 45b & 45b.ii</p>	<p>This recommendation is supported by a new partnership with Canada’s largest food rescue charity Second Harvest, wherein Second Harvest will assist HRM to monitor and coordinate food supply and community demand in support of the Community Food Distribution Pilot and Emergency Food Playbook. Second Harvest will match quality surplus food with community food distribution partners, with the Food Truck Coordinator using the HRM Emergency Food Truck to bring this recovered food into communities. See Recommendations 45b and 45b.ii for more details.</p>		
 <p>56b. Explore a vermiculture pilot project to provide a limited number of free worm composting bins to community members along with worms, bedding and education.</p> <p>IS 56b</p>	<p>The Vermicomposting Pilot will provide residents with access to free vermicomposting kits and associated educational opportunities to increase their capacity to compost year-round, both at home and in their communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with community organization(s) to promote the Pilot • Finalize Pilot details including number of kits and workshop dates, locations, and times. • Promote and offer workshops • Evaluate the Pilot and program viability 	<p>Vermicomposting kits & workshops</p> <p>Total Budget: \$4,565.00 <i>(to be included in HRM Solid Waste’s 2024/25 budget).</i></p> <p>Municipal Ask (2024/2025): \$0.00</p>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES



Recommendation 1: Establish and fund a Food Council (FC). See aligned **Recommendations 1b.i, 2, 5, and 9d.**

Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan: The **Halifax Food Council (HFC)** will coordinate collective action for positive change; increase and center community participation in food system governance; support and fund community-based food initiatives; advise governments, institutions, and others; and guide and evaluate the implementation of the JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan.

Project Description: The **Halifax Food Council** is a collaborative food governance model that will replace and expand on the work of the Halifax Food Policy Alliance. The HFC will reside within a fledging organization (Ecology Action Centre) to reduce administrative burden and allow for the gradual exploration of legal incorporation. It will comprise an Advisory Circle responsible for overarching HFC governance and 2 FTE staff to support daily operations and mandate fulfillment. The HFC Terms of Reference will prioritize and increase community-level participation. Diverse representation will support collaborative, evidence-based decision making across the food system.

Total Budget: \$282,399.73

Municipal 2024/25 Ask: \$251,493.48

Current Status:

- Completed preliminary research into food council roles and governance
- Identified founding principles and roles
- Considered legal implications and selected governance model

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Hire and collaborate with consultant(s) to develop governance relationship, legal terms, and financial mechanisms between HFC and EAC
- Advance Advisory Circle Terms of Reference
- Formalize partnership between the HFC, EAC, and HRM
- Integrate (1) Indigenous and (2) ANSB food governance models
- Establish Advisory Circle and hire HFC staff

Lead: Halifax Food Council

Partners:

- Municipal Food Team & Legal Services
- Baxter Research Lab
- Ecology Action Centre
- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
- AKOMA
- One North End
- Nova Scotia Health

Intended Impact: The HFC will serve the following core functions:

- Oversee the **implementation and monitoring** of the *JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region*;
- Establish a **collaborative governance space** for food system actors to identify and pursue shared goals for the regional food system; and
- Hold and **distribute Community Food Grant funds** to those engaged in community based food initiatives that advance JustFOOD Halifax and other HFC & HRM priorities.

Monitoring and Evaluation: HFC will:

- Prepare an annual report to Regional Council, including HFC's activities and performance, project outcomes and updates, priority JustFOOD recommendations for the upcoming year, and financial statements
- Publish an annual food system monitoring report & a 5-year comprehensive progress review for the *JustFOOD Action Plan*

Recommendation 1b.i: Develop a sustainable funding stream operated by the Food Council (FC). *See aligned Recommendations IS1.*

Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan: Community engagement demonstrated a significant gap in accessible and low-barrier funding for community-based food initiatives. The **Community Food Grants Program** is an independent, arms-length funding stream (administered by the HFC) to support community-based organizations and grassroots initiatives that advance and align with the JustFOOD vision of a healthy, just, & sustainable food system.

Project Description: An accessible and sustainably-funded annual **Community Food Grants Program** will support community-based groups to advance projects that reflect community needs and progress systems-level change. The Program will focus on grassroots efforts and equity-deserving communities, recognizing community groups as agents of positive change.

The HFC will administer the Program, which will be designed to reduce barriers to application and reporting. The Program will offer:

- Simplified application processes;
- Grant writing supports;
- Operations funding; and
- Program evaluation, capacity building, and knowledge sharing resources.

Total Budget and Municipal Ask: \$185,718.75

Additional contributions from other funders are anticipated once the Program is established.

Current Status:

- Completed research into best practices and scoped Program values and principles
- Explored potential of combining grants into one intake, two streams with FeedNS Innovation Lab

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Once HFC is established, develop eligibility criteria, priority objectives, and evaluation frameworks
- Launch and evaluate Program

Lead: HFC to administer, HRM to fund

Partners:

- Feed NS
- Community food actors
- Additional Funders

Intended Impact: The Program will:

- Increase food security, justice, and sovereignty across HRM
- Reduce barriers to application and prioritize underserved communities
- Increase accessibility of funding and (re) distribute power to communities
- Demonstrate value of low-barrier, flexible, community-based funding
- Build community capacity and resilience
- Offer training and assistance
- Promote sharing of learnings

Monitoring and Evaluation: Recipients will report on activities and outcomes, through co-designed and supported evaluation processes. Impact and learnings from the Program will be shared through:

- Annual HFC reports to Regional Council;
- Updates on the [Virtual Community Food Hub](#); and
- Better understanding of community needs and opportunities

Recommendation 5: Create a virtual community food hub. See aligned Recommendations 1 and 6a.

Advancement of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*: The **Virtual Community Food Hub** is an online platform for sharing community food resources, funding opportunities, research, and food related activities in the Region. The Hub will be used to report on the progress of the JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan. It will be the home of the Halifax Food Council and a place to connect with other community food actors.

Project Description: The **Virtual Community Food Hub** will be the online home of the HFC. It will profile HFC activities and progress of the *JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan*. The Hub will expand on the work of the HFC to provide resources, programs, and research that strengthen community food action and foster ongoing collaboration and collective impact. The Hub will promote research and dialogue to identify emerging issues, informing implementation and adaptation of *JustFOOD*.

Total Budget: \$1,389.98, included as part of the HFC Budget (IS 1).

Current Status:

- JustFOOD website (justfoodhalifax.ca) active for two years
- Quote received for elevation to virtual food hub

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Work with Web Designer to expand justfoodhalifax.ca into the Hub
- Develop the virtual home of the HFC and Community Food Grants Program (IS 1b.i)
- Set up tools for reporting on progress of JustFOOD (IS 9d)
- Update the Community Food Assessment Toolkit and incorporate/link to other resources such as event calendar, Food Asset Map, and food researcher profiles
- Develop website maintenance plan and protocol for update

Lead: Halifax Food Council

Partners:

- Web and graphic designer
- HRM Municipal Food Team
- Food system actors, including: food organizations, researchers, and community members

Intended Impact:

- Build trust and participation in HFC and aligned governance bodies such as the ANSB and Indigenous Advisories
- Make it easy to track the progress of *JustFOOD*
- Increase awareness of food-related events, programs, resources, and research in HRM
- Foster connections and build capacity for food action
- Provide resources that increase understanding and awareness of the food system
- Amplify collective action and advocacy for systems change

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Annual updates and performance indicators evaluating JustFOOD progress,
- Reviews of content for relevance to HFC activities and emerging issues
- Analysis of website traffic and use of components like event calendars and research profiles
- Community surveys and outreach to gauge user experience and gather suggestions for improvement

Recommendation 6a: Develop the **HRM Food Asset Map**.

Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan: The **HRM Food Asset Map** is a visual, geographic database of food resources in the Halifax Region. The Map will be a communal resource to increase understanding of the regional food landscape; enable the tracking of changes over time; and support data collection and analysis to identify community vulnerabilities and strengths.

Project Description: The **HRM Food Asset Map** will provide open source data on food resources such as food organizations & services, outlets, agricultural land, licensed community kitchens, and advocacy agencies. The Map will be hosted on the Municipality's website (halifax.ca) and designed to provide food data to support researchers, policymakers, advocates, and community members.

Currently, the Map is in a preliminary development stage, with datasets on food outlets, community gardens, and community food services. Additional work is needed to refine the type and features of resources to be included; source and incorporate datasets; establish data maintenance protocols; and develop an easy to use public interface.

HRM will collaborate with the HFC, consultant(s), researchers, and community partners to advance the Map.

Total Budget and Municipal Ask (2024/25): \$25,300.00

Current Status:

- Developed preliminary data schema and incorporated data on outlets, services, and gardens
- Progressing relationship with CLARI, Dillon, and others to access data and best practices in food mapping

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Progress academic research partnership with CLARI
- Procure consultant to progress Food Asset Framework and ID datasets
- Acquire and refine datasets

- Establish protocols for data management
- Create public interface
- Launch, test, and refine the Map

Lead: Municipal Food Team and ICT

Partners:

- HFC
- Food Mapping Researchers (e.g., CLARI and Dillon)
- Data Stewards (e.g., 211 and FeedNS)
- Consultant(s)
- Community Partners (e.g., Community Health Boards and MFM)

Intended Impact: The Map will:

- Increase awareness of food resources;
- Create a baseline of shareable food resource data;
- Increase understanding of the regional food system and associated vulnerabilities and strengths;
- ID resources crucial for emergency food management; and
- ID assets important to equity deserving communities.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The Map will be consistently updated through data management and feedback from map users and community partners. Monitoring and evaluation of the Map will support tracking of food system evolution, which will be reflected in JustFOOD Monitoring Framework updates (**IS 9d**).

Recommendation 9d: Use key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate Plan progress. *See aligned recommendations IS 1, 5, 6a, 17, 32a.i, 45b, and 45b.ii.*

Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan: The *JustFOOD Halifax Action Plan* requires a **robust Monitoring Framework** to evaluate progress and impact over time, as well as to inform revisions and strategic adjustments. The proposed Monitoring Framework establishes high quality, interpretable, and useful indicators that can be used to assess the food system, report on JustFOOD Halifax progress, inform decisions, and catalyze action.

Project Description: The **JustFOOD Monitoring Framework** will consist of a set of indicators that will be reviewed annually by the HFC to gauge the state of the regional food system, measure *JustFOOD Action Plan* progress, and track food system action or changes. The indicators are adapted from the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, a well-adopted framework to support cities across the globe in tackling food issues. HRM became a signatory to the Milan Pact in 2023.

The initial JustFOOD Monitoring Framework establishes **29 food system indicators selected for effective measurement of JustFOOD progress and evaluation of the regional food system**. Indicators have been selected based on the availability of data and long term monitoring capacity. Data collection and sharing protocols will need to be developed for each indicator, increasing sustainability of collection. Open data will serve as a resource to the broader community.

Data collection, analysis, and sharing will require significant coordination between government and non-government actors across the food system.

Total Budget: No additional budget ask

Current Status:

- Identified criteria for priority indicators and selected 29 initial indicators

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Develop data collection, analysis, and sharing plans
- Develop reporting plans to communicate key findings and changes over time

Lead: Halifax Food Council

Partners:

- HRM Food Team and IT
- NS Federation of Agriculture
- Farmers Markets Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia Health
- United Way
- Mobile Food Market

Intended Impact:

- Evaluate progress and impact of JustFOOD over time
- Assess and report on food system change
- Build capacity for food systems planning at municipal level and inform HRM KPIs
- Strengthen partnerships and knowledge transfer through data collection, analysis, and sharing

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Annual review of indicators and regular updates on JustFOOD progress
- Ongoing review and refinement of the monitoring framework to ensure relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with priorities

Recommendation 11: Develop programs and resources that address the rising cost of food in collaboration with the Province, academic institutions, and other partners. *See aligned JustFOOD Recommendation 14.*

Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan: The Feed Nova Scotia Innovation and Learning Lab is progressing additional *JustFOOD Action Plan* recommendations, including the advancement of a **Social Supermarket Pilot & Rural Food Access Pilot**, both of which will promote affordable and dignified access to food. This work centres community voices in the exploration, design, and implementation of initiatives that increase food access.

Project Description: The JustFOOD team is partnering with FeedNS's Innovation and Learning Lab and other community food partners to advance recommendations from the *JustFOOD Action Plan*. Two pilot projects, the **Rural Food Access and Social Supermarket Pilots**, are being designed to increase dignified and affordable food access in two communities within HRM. Both projects are in the design stage.

A social supermarket is a community centered approach to selling food in a way that is affordable, offers choice, and maintains dignity. The Pilot will be designed with the primary intention to increase food access (rather than generating profits). The Rural Food Access Pilot will re-imagine what food access could look like in communities that are underserved by traditional food outlets.

Total Budget: No ask, the budgets for both Pilots will be determined through the design process, with FeedNS committing up to \$170,000 to support implementation.

Current Status:

- Design teams established
- Planning for minimum viable version for both Pilots underway

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Conduct community engagement for both Pilots
- Establish partnerships with food and community organizations
- Implement and evaluate Pilots

Lead: FeedNS Innovation and Learning Lab

Partners:

- Halifax Food Council
- Municipal Food Team
- Community-based organizations that align with pilot community and project scope

Intended Impact: The Pilots are intended to achieve the following:

- Increase dignified and affordable food access;
- Increase first voice, community-level participation in food systems work;
- Leverage existing resources and assets; and
- Develop an understanding of project feasibility, such as how Pilots can be sustained, expanded, or replicated in the long term.

Monitoring and Evaluation: FeedNS's Lab, in collaboration with the Pilot design teams, will evaluate components and viability of each of the Pilots to determine:

- Progress in furthering the objectives of each respective Pilot
- Community perspectives and feedback
- Insight into sustainability of the projects, and potential for replication in other communities

Recommendation 12: Promote fair and decent employment for all, including fair economic relations, fair wages, and improved labour conditions within the food and agriculture sector.

Recommendation 12e: Collaborate with libraries, schools, community centres, and faith based-organizations to **provide easily accessible social services** (e.g., literacy services, legal services, resource fairs) to migrant workers in agriculture.

Recommendation 12e.i: Develop multiple-language information packages to share with workers upon arrival in Nova Scotia that detail existing public services and how to access them.

Advancement of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*: No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia (NOII-NS) is a leader in outreach, public education, and advocacy for migrant workers in NS. While these workers are vital to our agriculture and food service industries, they are also one of the most food insecure, overworked, underpaid, vulnerable, and overlooked groups in our society. By providing support for NOII-NS's work, JustFOOD is promoting the rights and wellbeing of migrant workers in HRM, recognizing the value these workers bring to our food system.

Project Description: NOII-NS were key advisers for JustFOOD Part A recommendations, developed in consultation with migrant workers across Nova Scotia. NOII-NS has designed two Pilots to reduce the barriers workers face in accessing critical services and resources, easing their transition into working and living in our Region:

- **English for Migrant Workers (EMW) Pilot:** Creation and delivery of an English language course for migrant workers, with lessons that focus on workplace skills and knowledge, workers' rights, and local culture.
- **Welcome Bags Pilot:** Creation and distribution of packages (welcome bags) to migrant workers upon arrival in HRM. Bags will be designed to increase workers' awareness of rights and responsibilities, connect workers to support services, and provide workers with practical items for emergencies and personal hygiene

Total Budget and Municipal Ask: \$42,032.90

Current Status:

- Pilot scope and scale established
- Conversations Initiated with potential partners to support delivery of Pilots

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Prepare materials and recruit staff
- Engage with workers in HRM on both Pilots
- Deliver and evaluate Pilots

Lead: No One Is Illegal - Nova Scotia

Partners:

- Halifax Food Council
- ESL experts
- Community advocacy agencies

Intended Impact:

- Improve workers' language skills
- Increase workers' awareness of their rights and responsibilities
- Connect workers to relevant services and community resources
- Promote rights and wellbeing of workers in HRM

Monitoring and Evaluation: NOII-NS will measure participation in the Pilots, growth in language skills, and improved ability to access services and connect to community.

The Pilots will be continually evaluated to determine what works, what could be updated, and potential for the establishment of a long-term program.

Recommendation 17: Use Municipal facilities and assets to offer food programs, grow food, and support public food infrastructure. See *aligned recommendations 31b, 32a.ii and 32a.vi.*

Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan: The **Community Orchard Pilot** supports the integration and maximization of Municipal assets for food demonstration, production, access, and literacy by planting fruit/nut trees on centrally located, well-accessed Municipal land. The Pilot will build community and municipal capacity for fruit/nut production by improving growing infrastructure, promoting knowledge sharing, and hosting specialized training opportunities.

Project Description: A community orchard is a collection of fruit and/or nut trees that are used or shared by communities and grown in publicly accessible areas. The **Community Orchard Pilot** is an opportunity for HRM to expand and revitalize the Leighton Dillman Community Orchard, increase access to and awareness of fruit/nut trees, and grow community capacity for fruit/nut tree stewardship.

The new Urban Agriculture Specialist will collaborate with Horticulture staff to establish and maintain the Orchard. Residents will be supported to access fresh produce and engage in new ways of growing food. Through interpretive signage, residents will learn about growing fruit/nut trees. Specialized training will increase capacity of Municipal staff and community partners to grow trees across the Region.

Municipal Ask: \$8,840.00

Current Status:

- Established partnership with Horticulture for care and maintenance of trees
- Determined scope, scale, and location for Pilot
- Connected with experts for training

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Organize and host training on planting and caring for trees
- Procure, prep site, and plant trees
- Develop and execute maintenance plan
- Install interpretive signage
- Evaluate impact and explore expansion to other site(s)

Lead: Municipal Food Team

Partners:

- HRM Horticulture
- Community members

Intended Impact: The Community Orchard Pilot project will integrate and maximize Municipal assets for food demonstration, production, and distribution. Fruit/nuts may be consumed by community members and used in food literacy programming.

Training will provide Horticulture and other Municipal staff with knowledge on the care and maintenance of trees, increasing capacity for future community orchards and fruit/nut growing at home and elsewhere.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Pilot evaluation will include monitoring of the:

- Number of fruit/nut trees planted,
- Growth and health of the trees,
- Effort and impact of maintenance, and
- Opportunities for expansion to a program.

The Pilot will also evaluate the impact of tree maintenance training(s) through metrics such as the number of staff trained and attendees' self-identified capacity for fruit/nut tree growing.

A monitoring and evaluation plan for community use will be developed when trees reach fruit bearing age.



Recommendation 23e and 22: Fund a **full-time food coordinator staff position** at the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC) and establish and fund an **Indigenous food-governance model**. *See aligned recommendations 1c and 2.*

Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan: The creation of an **Indigenous Food Coordinator role** and the advancement of an **Indigenous food governance body** will support Indigenous food sovereignty and justice efforts across the Region. The centering of Indigenous approaches and perspectives will be critical to the success of the Halifax Food Council (HFC) as a governing body committed to racial equity, food justice, and community power.

Project Description: This Strategy advances the establishment of a **full time Food Coordinator position** at the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC). The Coordinator will serve as a member of the HFC; work with the HFC to promote collaboration and mutual support between Indigenous and settler communities; work with the Indigenous Working Group to explore and establish an Indigenous food governance body; advocate for actions and changes that promote Indigenous food justice and sovereignty; and advance relevant JustFOOD recommendations.

Total Budget: \$80,080

Municipal 2024/25 Ask: \$52,584

Current Status:

- MNFC Working Group struck
- Coordinator job description developed, in consultation with the MNFC Working Group

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Hire the Coordinator
- Develop mechanisms to support strong collaboration and mutual support between Indigenous Coordinator, Working Group, and HFC
- Identify Year 1 priority projects and JustFOOD recommendations for Coordinator to advance
- Explore and test Indigenous food governance models, with the support of a community-led working group

Lead: Indigenous Food Coordinator and Indigenous Community Working Group

Partners:

- HFC & Municipal Food Team
- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
- Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre
- Feed Nova Scotia

Intended Impact: The Coordinator and governance model will:

- Advance Indigenous food sovereignty, justice, and security efforts across the Region;
- Promote collaboration between Indigenous and settler communities and organizations;
- Increase community power and center racial equity in food system governance; and
- Strengthen the HFC through centering Indigenous approaches and perspectives.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Coordinator will report to MNFC Program Manager; performance will be evaluated internally to MNFC
- Coordinator will prepare annual reports to the HFC detailing activities undertaken, outlining project metrics, and evaluating the impact of the provided funding
- HFC will include updates on this work in its annual report to Halifax Regional Council

Recommendation 29: Develop community infrastructure and projects that **create economic and social benefits** in ANSB communities.

Recommendation 29b: Support the development of an **ANS-led community food hub**. *See aligned recommendations 1c, 2, and 26.*

Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan: A full-time **African Nova Scotian and Black (ANSB) Community Food Coordinator** is required to build capacity towards an **ANSB food governance body**, deliver **Black food sovereignty projects**, and advance related JustFOOD Halifax recommendations. The centering of ANSB approaches and perspectives will be critical to the success of the Halifax Food Council (HFC) as a governing body committed to racial equity, food justice, and community power.

Project Description: The ANSB Community Food Coordinator will lead ANSB food projects, build capacity for food governance, and represent the ANSB community on the HFC Advisory Circle. The Coordinator will liaise with the Municipal Food Team and HFC staff, establishing mechanisms for collaboration and mutual support. The Coordinator will be hosted by ONE North End (ONE), with guidance from the ANSB Working Group. In Year 1, the Coordinator will deliver two community identified projects: the (1) Caja Planter Box Project and (2) ANSB Meal Prep Program. The Coordinator will also begin to explore the creation of a Black Community Food Centre.

Total Budget: \$110,352.05

Municipal Ask (2024/25): \$105,491.05

Current Status:

- Community engagement led by the ANSB Working Group identified 2 priority projects
- Initial partnerships to support project delivery are being explored

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Develop job description, hire for role
- Establish project timelines and partnerships
- Order materials and launch programs

Lead: ANSB Sovereignty Working Group

Partners:

- HFC & Municipal Food Team
- ONE North End
- The North Grove
- NSCC Culinary Arts (Akerley)
- Akoma
- Delmore Buddy Daye Institute

Intended Impact:

- The Caja Planter Box Project will increase ANSB food sovereignty by making gardening more accessible and attainable
- The ANSB Meal Prep Program will provide community members with opportunities to create healthy, afrocentric meals; engage in communal dinners; and learn more about Black food sovereignty

Long-term goals are to build capacity to create an ANSB food governance body, and advance the development of a Black Community Food Centre.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Coordinator will report to ONE Senior Management, with internal evaluation
- Coordinator will report annually to HFC, detailing activities, project metrics, and impact of the funding
- HFC will include updates on this work in its annual report to Halifax Regional Council

Recommendation 32.a.i: Enable and fund the development of a **Community Plots Pilot**.

Recommendation 32.a.ii: Create and fund an **Urban Agriculture Specialist staff position** within the Municipality. See aligned Recommendations **17** and **56b**.

Recommendation 32.a.vi: Develop a **Community Garden Grant Program** funding stream.

Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan: The proposed **Urban Agriculture Specialist** (UAS) will support the expansion of HRM’s [Community Garden Program](#), new **Community Garden Grants Program**, and the development of additional Municipally-led urban agriculture programs, including the **Community Plots Pilot**, thereby increasing HRM’s knowledge base and capacity to provide opportunities for community food production.

Project Description: The [Urban Agriculture Specialist](#) (UAS) will develop and oversee urban food production programs that increase access to land and maximize municipal assets. The UAS will manage the [Community Plots Pilot](#), which will increase access to growing space through a Municipally-run, low or no-cost plot rental program. The UAS will also advance the [Community Orchard Pilot](#), in partnership with Horticulture. In collaboration with Community Developers, the UAS will administer the [Community Garden Program](#) and develop the [Community Garden Grant Program](#) to increase support for new and existing community gardens on municipal land to acquire resources and infrastructure, maintain/expand gardens, and conduct accessibility audits.

Total Budget / Municipal Ask (2024/25): \$184,400

UAS & program funds= \$103,000

Community Plots Pilot= \$41,400

Community Garden Grants= \$40,000

Current Status:

- Developed draft UAS job description
- Preliminary consultation conducted for the Community Plots Pilot and Community Garden Grant Program

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Finalize job description & hire UAS
- Identify sites, establish plots, create application process, and launch Community Plots Pilot

- Strike Review Team; develop TOR and supports for application & performance measurement; launch; and evaluate impact, need, and appropriate future budget for the Community Garden Grants Program

Lead: Municipal Food Team

Partners:

- Parks and Recreation
- Solid Waste
- HalifACT

Intended Impact: The new UAS will increase capacity of the Municipality to develop and enhance food production initiatives and increase urban agriculture expertise of the Municipal Food Team. Initiatives will prioritize reducing barriers to participation, strengthening the regional food system, and promoting community food access and sovereignty. Initiatives will prioritize communities most vulnerable to food insecurity and with limited access to growing space.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Initiatives will be assessed through:

- Community feedback to gauge accessibility, impact, and opportunities
- Metrics such as number of initiatives, community uptake, volume of harvest, area of growing space, and impact of grants

Ongoing evaluation of initiatives will occur to measure impact and consider feasibility for longer term programs.

Recommendation 33d: Work with partner organizations to develop a **backyard-sharing program**.

Advancement of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*: Throughout community engagement for JustFOOD Halifax, community members identified a need for greater access to low-barrier spaces for growing food. The **Backyard Sharing Program** will match residents that have available land with those who are seeking land for food production. The Program will provide a guidebook and template agreement to support users to establish this relationship on their own.

Project Description: The **Backyard Sharing Program**

will connect community members that have land suitable for gardening with community members who are seeking land for growing, tending, and harvesting food. The Program will identify potential sites or “backyards”, connect interested gardeners with interested landholders, and offer tools to support the two parties to enter into an agreement.

The Program will be hosted on the Municipality’s website, with the Municipal Food Team supporting matchmaking and capacity building. The landholder and gardener will independently negotiate and be responsible for their relationship and the shared use of land. The HFC, community partner, and HRM Corporate Communications networks will be used to promote the Program.

Total Budget: No ask; Municipal Food Team budget will cover costs, as needed

Current Status:

- Template land sharing guide and sample land agreement drafted by Baxter Research Lab

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Finalize Guide and Agreements
- Develop Platform, launch Program, and promote widely
- Evaluate performance and explore opportunities for improvement for improvement

Lead: Municipal Food Team and IT

Partners:

- HRM Corporate Communications
- Baxter Research Group

- Halifax Food Council
- Community food partners

Intended Impact: The Program is intended to:

- Increase access to and awareness of available growing spaces in HRM;
- Promote relationship building and connections between community members;
- Normalize food production and promote the sharing of resources;
- Build community capacity for urban food production and knowledge sharing;
- Increase community food access; and
- Promote opportunities for the growing of culturally relevant crops and traditional or culturally-specific farming practices.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The Program will be assessed by:

- Tracking engagement (monitoring use of matchmaking tools, visits to the site, and other metrics of Program participation); and
- Collecting stories/feedback from Program participants on experiences, lessons learned, usefulness of tools, and suggestions for improvement.

The Program will be continually assessed to gauge public awareness and impact, as well as to explore opportunities for promotion and expansion.

Recommendation 39: Improve and expand infrastructure that links buyers to sellers. This will build social cohesion and trust, support cultural exchange, and ensure sustainable livelihoods.

Recommendation 39a: Continue to **support the development of the Halifax Regional Food Hub** and provincially supported community food networks, creating centralized infrastructure to store, process, market, and distribute local food to serve HRM.

Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan: The **Halifax Regional Food Hub** seeks to build and strengthen Nova Scotia's regional food system by connecting local producers throughout mainland Nova Scotia to wholesale buyers.

Project Description: [The Halifax Regional Food Hub Co-operative \(Hub\)](#) will connect primary and secondary food producers located throughout mainland Nova Scotia with HRM-based wholesale buyers in the commercial, community, and institutional sectors. The Hub will offer facilities for aggregation, storage, online ordering, order fulfillment and delivery, and opportunities for co-marketing and promotion of local products.

Total Budget / Municipal Ask (2024/25): N/A. It is anticipated that a funding or in-kind contribution ask will come to HRM in Fiscal 2024/25 as part of the projected \$1.5 million budget for year 1 operations. HRM business parks have been identified as a suitable location.

Current Status: [Significant research and engagement have established a "minimal viable" Hub, governance model, operation principles, market analysis, and implementation plan.](#)

Recruitment is underway for a general manager, who will expand the co-op and implement the business plan. Funding has been secured to support business planning and human resources. Alternative funding sources continue to be explored for the implementation of the business plan and standing up of the Hub.

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Hire a manager to lead the standing up of the Hub
- Establish a facility for local food aggregation, storage, marketing, processing, and distribution
- Form co-op networks of small to medium mainland Nova Scotia food producers, boosting food sovereignty

- Create a co-op network of HRM buyers (e.g., nonprofits, institutions, and commercial buyers)
- Expand market access for HRM-based nonprofits, institutions, and commercial buyers

Lead: Halifax Food Council Team and Municipal Food Team

Founding Partners and Co-op Members:

- Feed Nova Scotia
- Halifax Food Policy Alliance
- Mobile Food Market
- Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia
- Nourish Nova Scotia
- Novalea Kitchen and Market
- Consultants: Flourish Community Development Co-op

Intended Impact: JustFOOD and community engagement for the Hub identified significant challenges in distribution and access to local food. By supporting local producers, building local food infrastructure, and creating efficient channels for food distribution, the Halifax Regional Food Hub will increase Nova Scotia's economic resiliency, food security, and food sovereignty.

Recommendation 45b: Develop a Climate Emergency Food Program. See aligned recommendation 45b.ii.

Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan: Partnerships are crucial to emergency response strategies, as community-level groups are uniquely attuned to needs, have trusting relationships with community members, and can provide rapid, targeted assistance, ensuring that resources and support are directed where most needed. Work to advance the **HRM Emergency Food Playbook** has focused on establishing community interest in and capacity to support emergency food responses.

Project Description: EMO is developing and updating tools to support the creation of the **HRM Emergency Food Playbook**, which will detail scenario-specific emergency food responses, identify “triggers” for these responses, and outline how emergency responders, the community, and other partners will be involved. EMO tools include the HRVA (identify critical food infrastructure and community risks & vulnerabilities) and SATURN (for situational analysis and response) projects.

JustFOOD has supported this work through relationship-building with potential community-based emergency food partners (EFPs). This has clarified EFPs’ interest, resources, roles, and potential for emergency food responses. A preliminary **Emergency Food Partners Survey** was developed to connect with key community food partners in six communities with high rates of food insecurity and increased vulnerability to events. The resulting EFP profiles demonstrate high interest in partnering with HRM to support emergency responses. Supplier Agreements will be developed to advance these relationships. The Survey will be expanded to other organizations and communities to gauge interest in emergency food partnerships.

Total Budget: \$83,000 for the Community Food & Climate Specialist role.

Municipal 2024/25 Ask: \$0, covered under current Contribution Agreement with EAC.

Current Status:

- Developed and launched Survey
- Completed and confirmed interest with 11 EFPs

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Increase capacity and circulate Survey in additional communities
- Negotiate Supplier Agreements with EFPs
- Incorporate agreements and community partners into broader emergency response plans

Lead: EMO & Municipal Food Team

Partners:

- E&CC (HalifACT), Legal Services
- Emergency food partners (local, regional, nonprofit, and commercial)

Intended Impact:

- Increase understanding of EFPs’ capacity to lead community-based emergency food responses
- Formalize roles, responsibilities, and expectations through Supplier Agreements
- Integrate community partners into Municipal emergency planning and responses s.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Track the number of Surveys and profiles completed
- Track number of Supplier Agreements
- Measure role and impact of EFPs during an event
- Track development of the Playbook and inclusion of EFPs in emergency responses

Recommendation 45b.ii: Develop an emergency food program. See aligned recommendation 45b.

Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan: The **Halifax Food Distribution Pilot** will maximize use of the HRM Emergency Food Truck to bring food into communities; distribute surplus food; and support community food organizations in food acquisition and delivery.

Project Description: In the **Halifax Food Distribution Pilot**, the new Emergency Food Truck Coordinator will use the HRM Emergency Food Truck to support Municipal emergency responses focused on community food distribution, preparation, and prevention of loss. In non-emergency times, the Coordinator will use the Truck to supply community-based partners with food, through the partnership with **Second Harvest** (SH), a nonprofit food rescue organization. The Coordinator will also provide partners with access to the Truck to support their programs. Community food distribution activities will strengthen emergency response due to relationships built and community knowledge gained, as well as Coordinators familiarity with Truck operations.

The agreement with SH provides access to their food rescue app to coordinate food supply and demand in the Region. The Truck will move food from suppliers to community partners in a timely manner, reducing food waste/loss and freeing up partners' time for program delivery.

Total Budget: \$63,381.00, no ask as covered by existing budgets

Current Status:

- Refrigerated Truck is road ready
- Agreement made with SH and community-level partners engaged
- Truck Coordinator position approved, hiring underway

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Hire Coordinator
- Update foodrescue.ca to include Truck as option
- Create Truck calendar and Agreements of Use
- Launch and promote Pilot

- Evaluate uptake and food rescue opportunities
- Explore options for development of long term program

Lead: Municipal Food Team and EMO

Partners:

- Second Harvest
- HRM Environment and Climate Change (HalifACT)
- Community Food Organizations

Intended Impact: The Pilot is intended to:

- Support emergency food distribution, preparation, and loss prevention;
- Strengthen relationships with community actors, and grow mutual capacity for food distribution and emergency food responses. .

Monitoring and Evaluation: During Emergencies, EMO will track:

- Food and supplies distributed/preserved
- Communities served and ways in which the Truck supported responses

For Community Food Distribution, the Coordinator will work with SH to track:

- Quantity and value of food rescued
- Communities and organizations served

The Pilot will be evaluated with a mind to evolving community needs, towards the establishment of a permanent program

Recommendation 51: Convene food system actors to assess and monitor food loss and waste reduction across the food value chain.

Recommendation 51a: In collaboration with partners such as the National Zero Waste Council, Divert Nova Scotia, Second Harvest, and Halifax Solid Waste Resources, identify gaps and develop better systems for the collection of food-waste data to (1) establish a baseline measure of food waste and (2) identify opportunities to address or prevent food waste.

Recommendation 51b: Participate in regional and national conversations on food waste and circular economy.

Advancement of the *JustFOOD Action Plan*: HRM has partnered with the National Zero Waste Council, [Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad](#) (COIL), Halifax Food Policy Alliance, and the Halifax Partnership to advance the [Circular Food Hubs: Mainland Nova Scotia](#) Pilot. This Pilot is **exploring circular food solutions that reduce food waste/loss**, contribute to shorter supply chains, circulate resources, and regenerate natural systems.

Project Description: The **Circular Food Hubs Pilot** includes peer-to-peer learning through workshops, data collection and strategic opportunity assessment, and the piloting and testing of solutions that divert, reuse, and upcycle food loss/waste resources across the food value chain.

Data collection for the Pilot has increased understanding of where food loss/waste is happening across the food system. In addition to providing guidance and funding for testing solutions, the Pilot is building collective capacity for food loss/waste prevention by connecting participants with local leaders in food waste prevention and circularity, as well as those leading similar innovations elsewhere in Canada.

Budget: No ask. Pilot is partner funded.

Current Status:

- Workshop: [Supporting Circular Food Systems hosted May 2023](#), created a shared vision for circular food hubs in Nova Scotia
- Workshop: [From Vision to Action, July 2023](#), presented food flow analysis and recommended interventions
- Currently the Pilot is in the testing phase of the project. The [Circular Food Solution Challenge](#) closed November 2023. Grants are being awarded and lessons learned will be shared

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Results and final reports from Challenge due February 2024
- Explore opportunities to advance circular food solutions through collaborations such as the Challenge Roadmap, Regional Food Hub, Virtual Food Hub and other initiatives

Lead: HRM Solid Waste Resources and National Zero Waste Council

Partners:

- Halifax Food Policy Alliance
- Halifax Partnership
- COIL
- Local businesses and organizations

Intended Impact:

- Increase understanding of food waste/loss points across the food system
- Collective testing of solutions and ideas towards a more circular local food system
- Reduction in food loss/waste
- Advance a place-based circular hub for our Region



Recommendation 56.b: Explore a vermiculture pilot project to provide a limited number of free worm composting bins to community members along with worms, bedding, and education.

Advancement of the JustFOOD Action Plan: The **Vermicomposting Pilot** will provide residents with access to free vermicomposting kits and associated educational opportunities to increase their capacity to compost year-round, both at home and in their communities.

Project Description: Vermicomposting is a practical way to participate in year-round household composting. It uses earthworms housed in closed containers to quickly break down household food waste into high-quality, nutrient rich soil.

The Pilot will provide opportunities for community members to participate in vermicomposting workshops and receive limited vermicomposting kits to support year-round composting at home.

Benefits of household and community-level composting include: reduced food waste sent to compost facilities or landfills, decreased costs of transporting organic waste to composting facilities, and production of compost that can be used by the community to support the growing of food.

Total Budget: \$4,565.00 No ask, to be included in HRM Solid Waste's 2024/25 Budget

Current Status:

- Confirmed partnership with and commitments from HRM Solid Waste
- Established scope and scale of Pilot
- Formulated and approved the budget

Next Steps for 2024/2025:

- Partner with community organization(s) to promote the Pilot
- Finalize Pilot details including number of kits and workshop dates, locations, and times

- Order supplies and assemble kits
- Prepare knowledge products and training materials
- Promote workshops
- Offer workshops
- Evaluate the Pilot and consider potential for development of a program

Lead: HRM Solid Waste Resources

Partners:

- Municipal Food Team
- HFC and Community organizations

Intended Impact: The intended impact is to increase the capacity of residents to engage in composting in their homes and neighborhoods by providing the knowledge and tools necessary to engage in vermicomposting year-round. The Pilot will also leverage existing Municipal programs to advance JustFOOD recommendations.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Evaluation will occur throughout the Pilot and will inform future workshops and program development. It will include metrics such as number of kits distributed, number of participants at workshops, participant feedback, and new partnerships developed.