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# Local Food Model for the City of Thunder Bay Broader Public Sector Institutional Procurement

## Baseline Data and Stakeholder Issues Preliminary Report

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# 1.0 Introduction and Background

## Background

The Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay is an advocate for locally produced foods, supporting the adoption of the Thunder Bay Food Charter, the Community Environmental Action Plan, a Community Garden policy, and participates on various local committees, including the Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy, to increase the use of local foods. The City recently adopted a Sustainable Ethical Environmental Purchasing Policy and is a leader in the community in terms of supply management.

One of the long-term goals of the City of Thunder Bay is to see a shift towards a food service model that prioritizes local food within the Broader Public Sector. The City of Thunder Bay currently oversees purchasing for four publically funded day care centres and three publically funded long-term care facilities:<sup>1</sup>

- Algoma Child Care Centre
- Ogden Child Care Centre
- Grace Remus Child Care Centre
- Woodcrest Child Care Centre
- Dawson Court Home for the Aged
- Grandview Lodge Home for the Aged
- Pioneer Ridge Home for the Aged

The City's procurement project will target a 10% increase in NW Ontario/Ontario food purchases for the above mentioned community services.

The current project builds on a successful 2012 project that identified players in public sector food procurement in the city and the capacity of local (regional) producers to supply public institutions with nutritious locally-sourced product. A projected 2% increase in public sector purchase of local food was easily met and commitment made by many of the survey and workshop participants to continue to strive towards increased local food production, processing, purchase and consumption by secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, hospitals and long-term care facilities. The research identified next steps in closing the gaps and opening opportunities for increase purchase of local food by public sector buyers.

This report presents the findings from the first task in developing the local food service model for the City of Thunder Bay. This task involved two components:

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<sup>1</sup> Dawson Court and Grandview Lodge are planned for closure in late in 2015. St Joes Care Group will be opening a new facility to accommodate the City's closure of 300 LTC beds late in 2015. The significant loss of LTC beds will reduce the City's total food spending. The food buying volume will follow the beds and shift over to St Joes, who contract out their food services.

1. Conducting a detailed assessment of current NW Ontario/Ontario food purchasing processes and products, price points, and available inventory at each of four municipally funded day care centres and three long-term care facilities to establish a baseline of local food purchases.
2. Confirming stakeholder issues through a standardized data collection process in order to develop baseline measurements and track increases in local foods procurement (i.e. a system for benchmarking results).

## Partners

One of the strengths of last year's project and this current project is the partnerships that have been formed with various agencies involved in local food production, promotion and research. These partners represent key stakeholders in helping to identify and understand current purchasing practices of NW Ontario/Ontario foods and how the purchase of NW Ontario/Ontario food in the broader public sector, specifically in the Thunder Bay region, can be increased. They will also assist to provide an understanding of the types of foods grown, limitations to production and other barriers to accessing NW Ontario/Ontario food. City of Thunder Bay departments include: EarthCare, Supply Management, Community Services and Development Services.

Partners with the City of Thunder Bay include:

1. The **Thunder Bay Federation of Agriculture** (TBFA) is a partner with the City of Thunder Bay to increase the amount of local and Ontario foods purchased by the broader public sector.
2. The **Thunder Bay District Health Unit** (TBDHU) plays a lead role in the dissemination and delivery of educational materials related to local food and whose nutritional staffs connect to day care centres and long-term care facilities to do menu planning and instruct in nutritional requirements.
3. The **Food Action Network** liaises with local producers, local food caterers and eating establishments to promote awareness of local food initiatives.
4. The **Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy** is an action plan being developed to bring alive the vision articulated in the Thunder Bay Food Charter. The team developing the Food Strategy is connected with multiple stakeholders through its working groups, one of which is food procurement.

## Methods

Two key data collection tools were developed to compile the baseline data from the seven participating institutions: an electronic survey and a key informant interview for food service managers and core staff (operations personnel, nutrition service managers, and chefs) at the institutions. Representatives at the seven institutions listed above were contacted by HCA and invited to complete the online survey in advance of a site visit and the key informant interviews.

Data collected through the online survey includes the following:

- Number of meals served per institution, per day

- A description of the institution’s consumer demographics
- Approximate total yearly expenditures on food products
- A description of the current menu at each institution
- Names and contact information of local food vendors for each institution
- Information regarding food safety regulations and nutritional requirements to be met by each institution

The follow-up site visit / key informant interviews were used to explore the current food purchasing practices of the institution; identify opportunities and obstacles to local food procurement; and assess current awareness and understanding of seasonality and availability of Ontario food items, including processed food, protein, and produce. The institutions were also be asked about current or planned activities and events that highlight Ontario food items on their menus. Food service managers were also asked about the capacity of their facility and kitchen staff to incorporate local food in the menus and the challenges they encounter related to local food procurement.<sup>2</sup> The site visits to the seven institutions were conducted during the week of April 14, 2014.

### **Introduction to the Findings**

There is an expressed desire among institutional partners to support the local Thunder Bay economy through their procurement practices by sourcing local food through local vendors. The seven institutions serve nearly 3,000 meals and snacks each day, and have a combined annual food procurement budget of \$1.5 million. According to the seven partners, local food is perceived to be fresher, higher quality, more trustworthy, and better for the environment compared to processed and imported food. Perhaps most importantly, purchasing local food means supporting local business—producers, distributors, and processors—which is a powerful motivator in Thunder Bay. Inspired by a commitment to the Thunder Bay community and the people they serve, the potential for broader public sector local food procurement is very real—but achieving results will not be easy. Fortunately, there is no shortage of institutional leadership to support this project, and the atmosphere among institutional partners is collaborative and enthusiastic.

Section 2 of this report presents an overview of the challenges and opportunities related to increasing local food consumption within the broader public sector in the City of Thunder Bay.

Section 3 and 4 provide a food service overview of the participating child care centres and long-term care facilities.

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<sup>2</sup> The letter of introduction, the online survey and the key informant interview guide are presented in the Appendices.

Section 5 introduces the features / components of Broader Public Sector Procurement in the City of Thunder Bay and Section 6 provides a list of relevant policies, by-Laws, procedures and regulations (municipal, provincial, federal).

Section 7 identifies the areas that require further exploration under Task 2 of the project and Section 8 presents the profiles of the seven participating institutions.

## 2.0 Identifying Challenges and Seeking Solutions

Increasing local food consumption within the broader public sector in Thunder Bay is pitted against several confounding factors that will be addressed in the food model. The challenges and opportunities are described below.

### Supply

Northwestern Ontario is unique compared to the rest of the province. Growing seasons are shorter, and agriculture is practiced on a smaller scale, therefore much of the local Northwestern supply is sold before it hits the supply chain. Institutional partners are unsure that local producers can meet the demand, especially at the specs they need and the price they can afford. In many cases, partners are not fully aware of the range of different vendors that source local products, or the products that are available—they do not all know what is locally available, or how to procure these products.

The second phase of this project will review in greater depth the products that are commonly purchased and identify opportunities for alternative suppliers. The information will then be shared with the institutions. Opportunities for partners to share information about their sources amongst themselves should also be afforded. There are several initiatives seeking to consolidate supply and help local producers reach a larger market—demand is high and competition is healthy. There are two other recent recipients of Greenbelt Funding who are using the money to invest in distribution infrastructure. Belluz' Farms received \$85,000 towards the construction of a packaging and storage facility to create new market opportunities for small and medium sized farms. With a consolidated supply and an efficient distribution and sales system, this is a significant opportunity for the broader public sector. LA Quality Foods received funding to implement a traceability system that will track beef products to the original farm, essentially authenticating the local provenance of their product. This technology can be widely applied to other products and other businesses as well. Economic development to build upon these projects is a key component of the Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy.

The Greenbelt Fund is a provincial initiative that defines “local” as “Product of Ontario”. Local food auditing under this program would account for any food item that was produced within the provincial borders. Proximity to the Manitoba and U.S. borders, however, presents another confounding factor, unique to the region. Southern Ontario is more than 1,500 km from Thunder Bay—more than double the distance between Thunder Bay and Winnipeg (700 km). Duluth, Minnesota is even closer (300 km). The mainline food distributors, namely Sysco and Gordon Food Services (GFS) have relocated their warehousing and distribution centres to Winnipeg, and thus are more inclined to source locally from Manitoba than Ontario. In order to bring in more product of Ontario, distribution channels may need to be rebuilt from the south, or more food needs to be produced in the north.

## **Cost**

The perception that local food costs more is influenced by consumer prices the institutional partners are accustomed to paying at farmers' markets and other retail outlets. Raw food budgets are very tight, and cost savings are incentivized through membership with HealthPro, a group purchasing organization (GPO) that offers competitive prices and attractive rebates for health care institutions under certain conditions. For smaller volume buyers, such as the child care centres, bulk orders of produce through Sysco are cheaper than smaller orders from alternate suppliers but the kitchens are left with more food than they can use or store properly resulting in higher amounts of food waste.

Corporate group purchasing, and blanket orders for commonly purchased, high volume items administered by Supply Management have the potential to leverage demand for lower prices from local suppliers. Alternately a specially designed local food rebate system, and alternate cash flows to balance budgets should be explored.

## **Quality Assurance**

The implications of poor quality or contaminated food served at long-term care homes and child care centres is significant. Children and the elderly are most vulnerable to food borne illness so food safety is paramount. Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and Canada GAP certifications offer more assurance and less risk. Larger distributors and producers are more likely to offer these assurances. Smaller producers and distributors will be required to invest in these certifications in order to be able to accommodate institutional procurement.

When low quality or rotten food is received, it is returned and refunded, but institutional settings have less flexibility than other food service businesses because they operate with set menus and are required to document any substitutions, which can be an onerous task. Institutional buyers have to be confident that vendors will be able to deliver consistently high-quality products on time. Vendors must be able to meet these specifications in order to fill institutional demand.

## **Supply Management**

The City of Thunder Bay administers the procurement of all municipal departments, including the Homes for the Aged and the child care centres. Supply management is governed by a set of policies to which the institutions must comply. The Manager of Supply Management has the authority to negotiate "blanket orders" and "group purchasing" contracts with suppliers through the RFP tendering process. There are two standing order contracts administered by the City—one is with Sleeping Giant Dairy and the other is with Weston Bread. The tendering process is governed by By-Law 113-2011 Supply-Management. There

are provisions within the by-law that encourage ethical and sustainable procurement practices.

The City also maintains a list of preferred vendors. These are companies that have been reviewed by the organization and approved as a first choice company with whom to conduct business. Departments are encouraged to make purchases from these companies, usually because they offer significant cost savings over the competition. The municipality also supports the Electronic Store Front—an intranet program where municipal departments can view a list of preferred suppliers.<sup>3</sup> Not all of the institutions use this service, nor are they all aware that it exists. There is an opportunity to expand the list of preferred vendors to include distributors who offer a greater, and more reliable supply of local food.<sup>4</sup> The corporate terms and conditions of procurement are not well understood by many of the smaller volume purchasers. The City Manager of Supply Management, is a strong proponent of local food purchasing for the broader public sector. He has spent some time developing a local food procurement model for the city and is examining the use of “forward contracts” with local producers. Activities in Task 2 will explore the role of the Supply Management Division, and include research questions to support the development of tools the city can use to increase local food purchases.

### **Tracking and Measuring Food Provenance**

Unfortunately, without accurate and reliable information about the origin of the products procured by institutions at the time of purchase, there is no definite way that these institutions will be able to measure or track changes in local food consumption, nor will they be able to demonstrate an increase of local food purchases against a benchmark figure. According to one high volume institutional purchaser, “It’s impossible to know. The only way to tell where the food comes from is by reading the packaging after it’s delivered.” A quick scan through the labeling on cases in pantry and refrigerators reads like a map of the world. Many commonly purchased items divulge little, if anything, about their origins—rendering benchmarking, and tracking local food procurement in institutional settings exceedingly difficult unless the product is purchased from a well-established local farm capable of meeting institutional volumes and quality assurances. It is the only way to be sure.

Of the seven institutions consulted, only one was able to offer an approximation of what percent of total raw food costs was spent on products from Ontario. The investigation was of his own impetus and the figure was arrived at based on sales figures from vendors who were preferred by this particular buyer for their local authenticity. Notably, this figure did not include dairy products, as the origin of the fluid milk was not immediately apparent, although it is local. When that

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<sup>3</sup> Not all of the City’s preferred suppliers offer online services.

<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that outside of day cares and homes for the aged, little raw food is bought elsewhere in the corporation.

information is factored into the equation, a suitable benchmark can be established against which other institutions can be measured.

Despite the many challenges, well documented in the growing body of literature on broader public sector local food procurement, there is considerable opportunity for increasing the purchase and use of local food by municipal institutional partners if:

- Established and alternative distribution channels are able to consistently and reliably supply high quality local/Ontario product to institutional specifications;
- Vendors can provide accurate and reliable information about product origin for fresh, frozen, and non-perishable items at point of purchase *and* sales reports and invoicing;
- Local food production (agriculture) and distribution infrastructure is supported and/or developed so that regional businesses can accommodate both of the above; and
- Municipal by-laws and provincial policies and funding programs align to facilitate investment in local food by the broader public sector.

### 3.0 Food Service Overview: Child Care Centres

For three of the four child care centres that coordinate their menus, there is a different menu each week, and each lunch features an option between one of two similar (and equally appealing) entrée items to accommodate food sensitivities and preferences. The winter menu runs from September to June on a six-week long menu cycle, however there is a current proposal to rotate the menu on a four-week cycle to reduce workload and address food waste issues. The summer menu runs from July to August on a four-week cycle.

The menu is designed once a year by the three centre supervisors, with informal input on recipes from Lisa Keenstra, the chef at Ogden Child Care Centre. (Lisa is a Red Seal chef.) The menu is then reviewed by a Registered Dietician from the Health Unit in order to ensure that it is nutritionally balanced and complies with Canada's Food Guide and the TBDHU Day Care Manual. The three centres (excluding Grace Remus, where meals are prepared at Pioneer Ridge) are coordinating their menus to ensure consistent service delivery between facilities, and to create opportunities to coordinate food purchases for reduced waste and cost savings. This process is fluid, informal, and not mandated.

Unplanned menu substitutions are possible, but avoided due to the inconvenience and paperwork involved when a substitution is made. Substitutions occur when a product or food item has spoiled or was not delivered on time. Menu substitutions are required to be from the same food category in order to be permissible—a chocolate donut cannot be substituted for fish sticks for example.

Seasonality is considered in menu planning—lighter fare and more fruit is featured more prominently on the summer menu—but local food procurement is not emphasized. The supervisors and kitchen staff are very open to exploring more opportunities to include local food in their menus, however.

Despite having limited space and some kitchen equipment issues, the child care centres make most of the meals and snacks, including baked goods and roasted turkeys from scratch; canned soup is an occasional exception. Serving healthy meals prepared with raw ingredients and avoiding processed foods is a value that is strongly shared across the centres.

Roseanne Marinaro, Program Supervisor at Woodcrest has expressed a keen interest in local food procurement and has offered to lead the other centres in exploring relationships with new vendors and finding local product substitutions. Roseanne enjoys the support of several of her staff, including cook Kathleen Bliss, who expressed having a strong personal affinity for local and organic food. Lisa Keenstra can contribute her culinary knowledge to creating recipes that reflect the availability of seasonal produce if time is afforded to do so.

## 4.0 Food Service Overview: Homes for the Aged

Much like the child care centres, the nutrition and food service supervisors at the homes for the aged facilities coordinate their menus to ensure consistent quality and service, and to take advantage of cost efficiencies. The menus are compliant with Canada's Food Guide, the provincial Long-Term Care Homes Act, and the municipal Homes Procedural Manual, which is currently under review.

The supervisors from each of the institutions have different backgrounds that complement each other in the menu planning process. They meet yearly to plan the menu and more frequently to address shared food service issues. However a more formal opportunity to collaborate on product sourcing, seasonal menu planning and to clarify procurement and food safety questions would be well used. Chris Bortuski from Grand View Lodge is a Red Seal chef and a local food afficianado, Zeferina Hladyniuk hails from an applied human nutrition background and offers an expertise in nutritional analysis—a step above that required by the aforementioned acts and policies. Mary Ann from Dawson Court has spent a career in health food service procurement, working with mainline distributors and in public sector procurement.

Chris is happy to volunteer as a lead for the group in identifying new sources of local food and working with vendors to ensure that they are “in the system” and can meet institutional specs and conditions. Having gone through similar processes with other vendors in the past, he feels this is a way he can contribute and has expressed a strong personal and professional commitment to the values inherent in this project. An asset to this project, his knowledge and experience would be easily transferred to the supervisors and chefs at the child care centres as well.

## **5.0 Features of Broader Public Sector Procurement**

### **Group Purchasing Organization (GPO)**

Municipal child care centres are not individual members of HealthPro GPO, but they have access to HealthPro pricing through corporate association with the City of Thunder Bay Homes for the Aged, which is a member of HealthPro. Most “pro-priced” items are purchased from Sysco, however HealthPro pricing incentives are also available through GFS and other mainline distributors. Larger suppliers are seemingly less able to source local product, and often do not divulge product origin at point of purchase.

### **Contract Suppliers and Standing Orders**

Municipal tenders were issued to Sleeping Giant Dairy/Parmalat for dairy supply and delivery. Sleeping Giant dairy products are all (or mostly all) product of Northwestern Ontario, and the dairy is located in the Thunder Bay area.

### **Group Purchasing**

The Manager of Supply Management for the City of Thunder Bay is authorized to enter into negotiations for the purpose of cooperative buying procedures with other bodies and agencies as may be considered to be advantageous to the Corporation.

(By-Law 113-2011 3.03 Group Purchasing)

### **Preferred Vendors**

A preferred vendor is a company who through a tendering process has been identified by the municipality as a first choice supplier for various goods and services. Municipal departments are encouraged to conduct business and purchase materials and supplies from these companies because they have been vetted through a process that confirms their ability to meet the demand and specifications of the organization’s procurement needs. Often, preferred vendors offer considerable cost savings to the organization. The criteria for preferred vendors is set by the city and may include provisions for environmental, social, and ethical practices. Vendors may be audited to ensure compliance with these criteria. The municipality may enter into a preferred vendor contract that spells out the terms of the business relationship. When a city department needs something, staff are expected to see if a vendor on this list provides it before looking at outside vendors. Institutional purchases may be made through other supply streams if none of the preferred vendors on the list are able to provide the goods and services that they require. The list of preferred vendors is maintained and published by the Manager of Supply Management at the City of Thunder Bay. Weston Bread and Sysco are preferred vendors.

### **Blanket Purchase Order**

This is a Purchase Order which establishes prices or a method for determining prices, terms and conditions over a stipulated period of time during which a vendor agrees to provide goods and services to the purchaser upon the

purchaser's demand. The Corporation uses Blanket Purchase Orders for frequently purchased Goods and Services, and various different departments within the Corporation utilize the Blanket Purchase Orders for their respective terms.” (City of Thunder Bay By-Law 113-2011 1.01 6)

### **Purchasing and Billing**

The municipal Corporate Credit Card Policy permits supervisors to make purchases of up to \$10,000 each month with a transaction limit of \$2,500. Regular food purchases for client meals are an eligible expense. Invoices are then remitted to the finance department and (City of Thunder Policy No. 05-01-13) vendors must be able to accept MasterCard. If a purchase is made by MasterCard, the invoice is sent to each credit card holder who will file the receipt with their monthly statement, for reconciliation and audit.

If vendors do not take MasterCard, they must fill out a form from Accounts Payable (to be registered as a vendor with the City) and a purchase order number will be assigned by the purchaser who may then proceed with the transaction. Purchase order numbers are sent when items are ordered by the originating department or via the Purchasing office.

Food orders are placed by chefs, supervisors, and store keepers in a number of ways. Some purchases are made online through Sysco’s online ordering system. A sales representative from Sysco also visits the individual facilities about once a month, however Sysco is encouraging that purchases be made more frequently online. Orders may also be phoned or faxed in. Each of the institutional partners has a different preferred method. Switching to an online purchasing model should be augmented to accommodate sales calls and phoned in orders as well. Nick, from Westfort Foods has maintained a strong relationship based on trust and reliability over several years with child care centre staff, who would like to continue working with this company as well as others.

## **6.0 Policies, By-Laws and Procedures**

### **Municipal**

By-Law 113-2011 Supply Management  
Policy 04-02-02 Environment & Community Sustainability  
Policy 05-09-01 Facility Design Standards  
Policy 05-02-02 Budget Process  
Policy 05-01-08 Reserve Funds  
Policy 02-02-05 Official Plan  
Policy 01-03-02 Homes for the Aged  
Homes Procedural Manual  
Policy 02-01-01 Economic Development  
Policy 05-01-13 Corporate Credit Card Policy  
Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy  
Thunder Bay & District Day Care Manual

### **Provincial**

Local Food Act, 2013  
Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007  
Day Nurseries Act, 1990  
Ontario Child Care Service Management and Funding Guideline 2013  
Ontario Food Premises Regulation (Reg. 562)

### **Federal**

HACCP Canada  
Canada GAP  
Canada's Food Guide

## 7.0 Areas that Require Further Exploration

In the process of reviewing relevant background documents, meeting with the key representatives at the seven institutions and preliminary discussions with the Manager of Supply Management, a number of questions / information gaps emerged that will be explored as part of the next phase of the study.

### Coordinating Menus and Bulk Purchasing

- What are the implications of using the same recipe on culinary creativity and economy (reducing food waste) in individual facilities? Is there some flexibility to allow the inclusion of other ingredients that are not in the recipe when they are locally available and in season? (e.g. adding carrots to pasta sauce.)
- Is the second choice entrée offered the same each day in one centre as it is in the others, or does each facility have the option to plan it independently?
- Is it reasonable for the child care centre supervisors and staff to consider extending the summer menu to include the months of June and September to better reflect the growing season?
- What ingredients do all seven institutions use that could be issued for tender by the municipality in addition to milk and bread? What are the specs for the products most appropriate for group purchase orders?

### Supply Management and Accounting & Budgets Divisions

- Considering the different preferences for placing food orders, how can an online inventory approach be adapted to suit each of the partners equitably?
- What is the process for becoming a preferred vendor? What are the criteria? How can a local vendor become a preferred vendor? Are there other considerations (ethical and environmental) other than price? Should there be?
- How is information about preferred vendors shared with institutional purchasers? Is there a better way to communicate this information?
- What is the process of collecting data on food volumes for tender RFPs, who develops the tender, and what set of policies guides this process? Is there an opportunity to incorporate, or explicitly state, a preference for local/product of Ontario into the tendering process?

- How can this project align more closely with the Supply Management Division and the Manager of Supply Management to support shared goals and desired outcomes?
- How can the role of the Supply Management Division be leveraged to create new sustainable procurement policies and procedures? Can forward contracts and biweekly quotes with local producers and vendors be developed and maintained by Supply Management?
- What is the best way to identify and track product origin at point of purchase? Could contractors be required to identify product origin through the tendering process?
- How are the HealthPro rebates applied when they are remitted to the municipality, and who is responsible for overseeing this process? How significant is the “pro pricing” and rebate to the City’s overall bottom line? How does HealthPro purchasing factor into determining budget lines for raw food costs?
- Can local food vendors be added to the Electronic Store Front? What would that process be? How frequently is the Store Front updated? Who is responsible for that? Can extra time be spent on expanding the Store Front to include local food items? Can the Store Front be adapted into a hardcopy resource for those who choose not to purchase online?
- How are the budgets developed for the long-term care facilities and child care centres? What is the funding formula used to determine a budget line for raw food costs? Who is responsible for developing the budget? What happens when food costs are over budget?

## Local Food Supply

- What local and mainline food distributors are best positioned to supply local and Ontario products to institutions?
- How can distributors be compelled to identify (or provide information on) product origin at point of purchase?
- What opportunities are there to invest in rural and agricultural economic development and local entrepreneurship in order to strengthen food security in the region?
- How can local supply from multiple producers be consolidated to accommodate growing public and institutional demand?

## Education and Training

- Is there an opportunity to open the menu planning process up to kitchen staff (chefs, cooks and store keepers)? Is it possible to have supervisors and kitchen staff from all four centres meet for an afternoon to participate in a special local food seminar? What date and location would work best to get everyone sitting around the same table?
- Considering financial limitations, what possibilities are there to compensate hourly-wage staff for spending extra time on menu planning and product research?
- Could a more formal process for regular and meaningful information sharing between the staff at each facility and Supply Management be established? What are the potential barriers to doing this? Is there a role for Public Health or another municipal body to facilitate that role?
- What specific information or knowledge is inconsistent between the seven institutions regarding policies, procedures, and procurement? What do they each need to know? (Food safety, municipal and provincial policies, budgets, funding, HealthPro, vendors, etc.)

## Provincial and Municipal Policies and Funding

- What funding opportunities are there to support the construction or renovation of kitchen facilities to increase storage space for the smaller institutions?
- Could special project funding from the Ministry of Education (the same body that funds day cares across the province) be applied to this project to offset costs? Are there similar funding opportunities within the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care?
- How can the funding of the two provincial departments be bridged with the investment from the Greenbelt Fund in order to align the initiatives better?
- What policy interventions exist to support funding provisions offset the increased costs of local food at the provincial and municipal level?
- How do the various policies governing the institutions at the provincial level confound local food procurement? How do they support it? What can

be changed to build local food into procurement practices across the province?

- How do municipal policies, by-laws and procedural manuals confound or support the procurement of local food? How can they be amended in order to do so?
- The Homes Procedural Manual is currently up for review. Is there an opportunity to integrate local food procurement provisions in the new manual? Who is leading this project?
- When and how are suppliers audited to ensure compliance with environmental and ethical principles, under By-Law 113-2011 Article 2.03 (d)? What tools are used elsewhere to audit vendors on ethical considerations in procurement?
- How can Supply Management, Environment and Conservation, and Economic Development policies and by-laws be aligned with the Food Systems Plan, the Official Plan and the institutions procedural manuals to promote the development of a sustainable local food system?
- Can the TBDHU Day Care Manual and performance evaluation be amended to award points for local food purchases alongside the other health, wellness and environmental indicators?

## 8.0 Public Sector Profiles

### Algoma Child Care Centre

Program Supervisor: Carla Aitken

807-684-3687

[rmarinaro@thunderbay.ca](mailto:rmarinaro@thunderbay.ca)

58 Algoma St. N. Thunder Bay ON P7A 8B9

Total licensed capacity: 54 children

Day care and after school care for children 18 months to 12 years

Total annual food procurement budget: \$24,000

Daily cost per child: Approximately \$3.50 to \$4.00

Meal Service	Number of Servings
Morning snack	25
Lunch	29
Afternoon snack	35

Vendor	Items
Sysco	Bulk items, meat, non-perishables, frozen food
Sleeping Giant Dairy (Parmalat)	Dairy products
Westfort Foods	Produce
Weston Bread	Bread (peanut free)
Maltese Grocery	Specialty items

### Kitchen Equipment

Algoma has a fully equipped kitchen, with reasonable storage space for dry/non-perishable foods, but limited storage space for fresh and frozen goods. This kitchen is the largest of the four municipal child care centres in terms of square footage.

## **Grace Remus Child Care Centre**

Program Supervisor: Jackie Jaklitch

807-684-3594

[jjaklitch@thunderbay.ca](mailto:jjaklitch@thunderbay.ca)

750 Tungsten St. Thunder Bay ON P7B 6R1

Total licensed capacity: 51 children

Day care and afterschool care is provided for children 18 months to 12 years.

This facility is licensed to operate until 2:00 am until June 30, 2014, when the service will no longer be available.

Snacks and meals are prepared in the kitchen by the staff of the adjoining Pioneer Ridge Home for the Aged. The program supervisor of the child care centre shares health and food preference information with the nutrition and food services supervisor of the home who then plans the menu and coordinates procurement between the child care, LTC and Meals-on-Wheels menus to capture cost and time efficiencies. As such, the menu at Grace Remus is not the same as the other three child care centres. The data for Grace Remus is included in the profile for Pioneer Ridge below.

## Ogden Child Care Centre

Acting Supervisor: Vera Nesbitt

Chef: Lisa Feenstra

807-684-3687

[vnesbitt@thunderbay.ca](mailto:vnesbitt@thunderbay.ca)

867 Woodcrest Rd. Thunder Bay ON P7G 0A3

Total Licensed Capacity: 94

Day care and afterschool care is provided for children 18 months to 12 years.

Total annual food procurement budget: \$40,000

Daily cost per child: \$3.50 to \$4.00

Meal Service	Number of Servings
Morning snack	15
Lunch	25
Afternoon snack	23
Late afternoon snack	40

Vendor	Items
Sysco	Bulk items, meat, non-perishables, frozen food
Sleeping Giant Dairy (Parmalat)	Dairy products
Westfort Foods	Produce
Weston Bread	Bread (peanut free)

### Kitchen Equipment

Ogden has a fully equipped kitchen, with reasonable storage space for dry/non-perishable foods, but limited storage space for fresh and frozen goods. This kitchen is best equipped of the four municipal child care centres.

## Woodcrest Child Care Centre

Supervisor: Roseanne Marinaro

Chef: Kathleen Bliss

801-625-3810

[rmarinaro@thunderbay.ca](mailto:rmarinaro@thunderbay.ca)

600 McKenzie St. Thunder Bay ON P7C 4Z3

Total Licensed Capacity: 76

Day care and afterschool care is provided for children 18 months to 12 years.

Total annual food procurement budget: \$32,000

Daily cost per child: \$3.50 to \$4.00

Meal Service	Number of Servings
Morning snack	35
Lunch	35
Afternoon snack	35
Late afternoon snack	50

Vendor	Items
Sysco	Bulk items, meat, non-perishables, frozen food
Sleeping Giant Dairy (Parmalat)	Dairy products
Westfort Foods	Produce, Weston Bread

### Kitchen Equipment

Woodcrest has a fully equipped kitchen, with reasonable storage space for dry/non-perishable foods, but limited storage space for fresh and frozen goods. This kitchen is smallest and newest of the four child care centres.

## Dawson Court Home for the Aged

Nutrition and Food Services Supervisor: Mary Anne Porter

807-684-2849

[maporter@thunderbay.ca](mailto:maporter@thunderbay.ca)

523 N. Algoma St. Thunder Bay ON P7A 5C2

Number of Beds: 150

Total annual food procurement budget: \$430,000

Daily cost per resident: \$7.74

Provincial Raw Food costs funding: \$7.68 per person, per day.

Overages on food expenditures are made up by the facility or the City.

Meal Service	Number of Servings
Breakfast	150
Morning snack	150
Lunch	150
Afternoon snack	100
Dinner	150
Evening Snack	100
Meals on Wheels (M-F)	50

Vendor	Items
Sysco	Bulk items, meat, non-perishables, frozen food, produce
Sleeping Giant Dairy (Parmalat)	Dairy products
Weston Bread	Fresh bread (peanut free)
Loudon Brothers	Bulk items, produce, non-perishables
VanderWees Farm	Eggs
Current River	Baked goods
B&B Farms	Potatoes

### Kitchen Equipment

Dawson Court has a fully equipped kitchen, and adequate storage for dry goods, frozen and fresh foods. In 2015, the City of Thunder Bay will divest ownership of Dawson Court and Grandview Lodge. The 300 beds will be moved to the new St. Joseph's long-term care facility currently under construction.

## Grandview Lodge Home for the Aged

Nutrition and Food Services Supervisor: Chris Borutski

807-625-2154

[cborutski@thunderbay.ca](mailto:cborutski@thunderbay.ca)

200 N. Lillie St., Thunder Bay, ON P7C 5Y2

Number of Beds: 150

Total annual food procurement budget: \$450,000

Daily cost per resident: \$7.80

Provincial Raw Food costs funding: \$7.68 per person, per day.

Overages on food expenditures are made up by the facility or the City.

Meal Service	Number of Servings
Breakfast	150
Morning snack	
Lunch	220
Afternoon snack	100
Dinner	150
Evening Snack	100
Cafeteria	30

Vendor	Items
Sysco	Bulk items, meat, non-perishables, frozen food, produce
Sleeping Giant Dairy (Parmalat)	Dairy products
Weston Bread	Fresh bread (peanut free)
Loudon Brothers	Bulk items, produce, non-perishables
LA Quality Foods	Beef (North western Ontario)
VanderWees Farm	Eggs (confirm origin)
Current River	Baked goods
B&B Farms	Potatoes
European Meats and Deli	Sausages
Royal Canadian Legion	Cabbage rolls
SASI Thunder Bay	Spring water

## **Kitchen Equipment**

Grandview Lodge has a fully equipped kitchen, and adequate storage for dry goods, frozen and fresh foods. In 2015, the City of Thunder Bay will divest ownership of Dawson Court and Grandview Lodge. The 300 beds will be moved to the new St. Joseph's long-term care facility currently under construction.

## Pioneer Ridge Home for the Aged

Nutrition and Food Services Supervisor: Zeferina Hladynuik

807-684-3945

[zhladynuik@thunderbay.ca](mailto:zhladynuik@thunderbay.ca)

750 Tungsten St. Thunder Bay ON P7B 6R1

Number of Beds at Pioneer Ridge: 150

Pioneer Ridge also provides meal service for 25 children at Grace Remus Child Care Centre and 50 lunches for residents at Jasper Place each day, and 50 lunches for Meals on Wheels Monday to Friday. The data for these services is included below.

Total annual food procurement budget: \$501,500

Daily cost per resident: \$7.80

Provincial Raw Food costs funding: \$7.68 per person, per day.

Overages on food expenditures are made up by the facility through cafeteria food sales or by the City.

Meal Service	Number of Servings
Breakfast	175
Morning snack	175
Lunch	275
Afternoon snack	175
Dinner	170
Evening Snack	100
Cafeteria	60

Vendor	Items
Sysco	Bulk items, meat, non-perishables, frozen food, produce
Sleeping Giant Dairy (Parmalat)	Dairy products
Weston Bread	Fresh bread (peanut free)
Loudon Brothers	Bulk items, produce, non-perishables
VanderWees Farm	Eggs (confirm origin)
Current River	Baked goods

B&B Farms	Potatoes
Super Store and Metro	Misc.

### **Kitchen Equipment**

Pioneer Ridge has a fully equipped kitchen, and adequate storage for dry goods, frozen and fresh foods. In 2015, the City of Thunder Bay will divest ownership of Dawson Court and Grandview Lodge. *At that time the Supply Management Division will assume responsibility of food procurement for this facility.*

## Appendices

## Appendix A: Letter of Introduction for Institutions

Local Food Procurement Model

Designed for The Broader Public Sector Institutions of the City of Thunder Bay

Re: Public Sector Visit: Tour, Interview and Survey

Dear (representative for the participating institution),

(Participating institution) has been selected by the City of Thunder Bay as one of seven local organizations to participate in the development of the local food procurement strategy. The goal of the project is to increase the sale of local and provincially produced foods among regional broader public sector institutions. Harry Cummings and Associates and a team of researchers have been retained by the City of Thunder Bay to gather information about local food procurement by broader public sector institutions. The information will be used to design and test a model for local food procurement that can be independently maintained and used by similar organizations in the region. This project is a component of the larger local food strategy being pursued by the City of Thunder Bay.

The first step in data collection is to learn more about the local institutional procurement practices. We have created an online survey for you to complete to help us better understand your food procurement practices, the meals that you serve and a little bit about where the ingredients come from. You can access the survey here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TBLocalFoodModel>

Please complete the survey no later than Friday April 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. If there are questions you're not able to answer, that's no problem; we'll work with you to find out as much as we can.

During the week of April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014, two consultants, Sarah and Raili, would like to visit with you in order to dig a little bit deeper by having a conversation about what is currently being purchased and consumed, what is purchased from local sources, where local suppliers or products can be substituted for non-local suppliers and products, and how to make that happen. We'll also be asking about what obstacles and opportunities you encounter when purchasing local food, and seek your advice on how local producers and distributors can start filling some of the supply gaps.

During our visit, which should take no longer than two hours, we'd love to have the opportunity to take a tour of your kitchen and dining facilities so that we have a solid understanding of the infrastructure and equipment you have in order to make the most appropriate recommendations through the food model. We'll use

the purchase order information you've shared with us to develop a local food purchasing resource that you will find useful and consult often.

The visit will include three components—following a tour of the facilities, we'll conduct a conversational interview where we will explore the issues mentioned above. Afterwards, we'd like to review the responses to an online survey that will be sent to you in advance of the visit, so that together we can identify opportunities for further exploration as we develop the model.

Raili Roy, Beanstalk Consulting, will be following up with you to discuss the project further. If you have any immediate questions please contact Raili at 807-251-2521 or [raili@beanstalkconsulting.com](mailto:raili@beanstalkconsulting.com)

We look forward to working with you on this very exciting venture!

Sincerely,

Don Murray, Harry Cummings and Associates ( [donald@hcaconsulting.ca](mailto:donald@hcaconsulting.ca) )

Sarah Megens ( [smegens@gmail.com](mailto:smegens@gmail.com) )

Raili Roy, Beanstalk Consulting ( [raili@beanstalkconsulting.com](mailto:raili@beanstalkconsulting.com) )

If you have any broader questions in relation to this study, please contact Thora Cartlidge, Planner II, Development Services, City of Thunder Bay. Ph. 807-625-2530 / Email: [tcartlidge@thunderbay.ca](mailto:tcartlidge@thunderbay.ca)

## Appendix B: Online Survey Instrument for Institutions

### Introduction

The Thunder Bay Food Model is an initiative launched by the City of Thunder Bay, through funding provided by the Greenbelt Fund, to increase the amount of local food purchased and consumed by area broader public sector institutions.

You have been invited to participate in an online survey followed by a key-informant interview series and institutional tour as a part of the pilot project that will inform the creation of a Local Food Procurement Model. With your input and support, the model will then be tested, refined, and shared with other organizations in the area.

The following survey is designed to help us learn more about the ingredients you buy, the meals that you serve, and the equipment you have in your kitchen. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. You may need to refer to your purchase orders in order to calculate costs for some questions. Don't worry! You can save your survey and come back to it later if you're not able to fill it all out at once.

The research is being led by a collaborative team of researchers from Guelph, Ontario with the support of a local consultant from Thunder Bay.  
Don Murray, Harry Cummings and Associates ( [donald@hcaconsulting.ca](mailto:donald@hcaconsulting.ca) )  
Sarah Megens ( [smegens@gmail.com](mailto:smegens@gmail.com) )  
Raili Roy, Beanstalk Consulting ( [raili@beanstalkconsulting.com](mailto:raili@beanstalkconsulting.com) )

If you have any broader questions in relation to this study, please contact Thora Cartlidge, Planner II, Development Services, City of Thunder Bay.  
Ph. 807-625-2530 / Email: [tcartlidge@thunderbay.ca](mailto:tcartlidge@thunderbay.ca)

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this exciting project!

Name:  
Organization:  
Role:  
Contact #:  
Contact email:

1. What meals do you serve in your institution? (Check all that apply) (Grid)

Meal	Check Yes	# of Servings/day
Breakfast		
Morning Snack		
Lunch		
Afternoon Snack		
Dinner		
Cafeteria		

2. What is your total annual food procurement budget?

(Text box) (Please enter the dollar figure)

3. Who are your food suppliers/distributors? (Check all that apply)

(Insert list of local food distributors, include several options for others)

- Sysco
- GFS
- Compass
- Sodexo
- Summit
- Others? (list needs to be completed)

4. Do you purchase food from local producers (farms, butchers, etc.) or retailers regularly (ie. once a month or more)? (yes or no)

5. If yes, please list the names of individual farms, butchers or retailers you purchase from on a regular basis? (text box)\*

6. Do you purchase food from local producers (farms, butchers, etc.) or retailers occasionally (seasonally)? (yes or no)

7. If yes, please list the names of individual farms, butchers or retailers you purchase from on an occasional basis? (text box)\*

8. Are you part of a group purchasing organization? (Yes or No)

9. If yes, which GPO do you belong to? (text box)

10. Are you under contract for any specific food purchases? (yes or no)

11. If yes, what products do you currently purchase under contract? (text box)

12. How often do you make food purchases?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly

13. What is the length of your menu cycle?
- Weekly
  - Monthly
  - Every three months (seasonally)
  - Yearly
  - N/A
14. Does your organization currently have a food procurement policy? (yes or no)
15. Do you purchase under provincial or federal food safety requirements? (check all that apply)
- HAACP
  - Canada GAP
  - Other: (identify)
16. What equipment is your kitchen currently equipped with? (check all that apply)
- Walk-in freezer
  - Walk-in cooler
  - Soup kettle
  - Robocoup
  - Chest freezer
  - Commercial deep fryer
  - Commercial oven
  - Commercial refrigerator
  - Commercial stove-top
  - Food warming station
  - Retherm food system
  - Food prep station
  - Other:
  - Other:
17. Do you prepare meals with raw/whole ingredients? (yes or no)
18. Do you use pre-sliced/processed ingredients (sliced vegetables, cheeses, meats etc?)
19. Do you serve prepared meals (heat and serve)? (yes or no)

**Thank you.**

## Appendix C: Key Informant Interview Guide for Institutions

### Thunder Bay Local Food Procurement Model Key Informant Interview Protocol

To begin, we'd like to learn more about the clients you serve and the kinds of meals you prepare for them. (Refer to sample menu.)

Walk me through the process of preparing this menu.

Tell me about how you decide what to put on the menu each week?

What are your main considerations?

What are main priorities for setting your menu?

What do you know about the tastes, preferences or limitations of the clients you serve? How do you receive that information?

How do balance the food preferences of your clients while meeting provincially mandated nutritional and requirements?

What are the challenges in achieving that balance?

What would make it easier to achieving that balance?

Do you feel limited by anything when making menu decisions?

If yes, what are those limitations?

As you're aware, we are looking at the potential to increase the consumption of local food in the broader public sector. How do you feel that increased local food procurement could impact food service at this organization?

What makes you feel this way?

Why are you interested in purchasing local food for your kitchen?

What has motivated you to be a part of this project?

Why is buying local important to you? (or why isn't it?)

How do you define local food?

In your opinion, what are the best sources for local food in the area?

Suppliers? Farmers? Retailers? Distributors? Others?

What are the greatest challenges you encounter to buying local from an institutional perspective?

How are these challenges different from buying local as an individual consumer?

How are these challenges the same?

Where do you see opportunities for local food purchases to expand in your kitchen?

What are the hurdles, if any, to achieve these opportunities?

What food products do you think you could source locally for this institution but have been unable to?

Are there products you can purchase as an individual consumer but not as an institutional buyer? Why aren't you able to bring these products into your kitchen?

What would make it easier for you to procure more local food?

How can the City of Thunder Bay, through this project, support local food procurement at your institution?

What is the maximum percentage (dollar amount) that you expect to be able to purchase from local sources?

What changes do you think you could make to your menu that would enable you to serve more meals prepared with local ingredients?

What would these changes entail or require? (Cost? Effort? Staff? New suppliers?)

What changes do you think you could make to your operations or kitchen infrastructure that would enable you to serve more meals prepared with local ingredients?

What would these changes entail or require? (Cost? Effort? Staff? New equipment? Contractual changes?)

Thank you for your responses so far! Next we'll go through some of the answers you provided on the online survey, in order to dig a little deeper.

(The next set of questions are contingent on survey responses, and will vary according to respondent. This is a sample of questions that would need to be refined.)

On the survey you indicated that you purchase food from (name suppliers). What products do you typically purchase from each supplier? (Refer to purchase orders.)

(If part of a GPO) Tell me more about the terms and conditions of the GPO you are a part of?

What are the advantages of belonging to the GPO?

What are the drawbacks?

(For mainline food distributors) How are you able to identify whether or not these products are local/product of Ontario?

How do these suppliers identify product origin?  
If you were to inquire about the product origin, who would you ask?  
How important is product origin to your purchasing decisions?

(For local/regional producers and suppliers) How did you find out about these suppliers?

What are the positive aspects of working with these suppliers?  
What are the drawbacks, if any, of dealing with these suppliers?  
Are they able to meet your institutional purchasing needs?  
If not, how could local suppliers better meet your needs?

What information do you need about local or regional suppliers when making a purchase?

How do you generally place your orders with your suppliers?

How effective is that?  
Are there ways that local suppliers could alter their operations in order to accommodate your purchasing practices?

When thinking about the food system as a whole, and recognizing that the potential for using local food in an institutional setting is unmet, what changes need to be made in order to increase local food purchases by broader public sector institutions?

Is there anything else you'd like to add to the conversation?

## Appendix D: Literature Review

### **Policies and Regulations and Opportunities and Constraints of Purchasing NW Ontario/Ontario Foods**

#### **Ontario Regulations and/or Acts**

There are provincial regulations and Acts that influence the public sector purchasing of NW Ontario/Ontario foods including the Local Food Act, assented in 2013<sup>5</sup>. There are also specific regulations regarding food and nutrition for day cares and long-term care homes. Several studies support the initiative to provide greater access to local foods to the general market and to health care providers and day care operators in Ontario. A report by Deloitte<sup>6</sup> stated “a thriving local food industry provides direct economic benefits as well as other key benefits related to the local and global environment, health benefits that result from eating fresher food, and social benefits that can result in linkages established and maintained among people in the community.”

The recently assented Local Food Act provides support to Thunder Bay local food strategies, including the purchasing of NW Ontario/Ontario foods for City operated day cares and long-term care homes. The Local Food Act fits into the Ministry of Food and Agriculture’s broader local food strategy, to foster successful and resilient local food economies and systems in Ontario, help increase awareness of local food in Ontario and develop new markets for local food. The Ministry expects that providing local food in public sector institutes will help build Ontario’s economy, create more jobs, and expand the agri-food sector.

Further, the Ministry introduced the Local Food Fund to support innovative local food projects that celebrate local food and support jobs and economic growth in Ontario. The Local Food Fund is a three-year initiative with funding of up to \$10 million per year to support innovative local food projects that reduce barriers to regional economic development; result in sustainable regional economic development; and have a positive impact on the Ontario economy. The City of Thunder Bay has the opportunity, like any Ontario municipality, to apply for funding to support several projects and programs related to the local food initiatives. This funding is imperative as many municipalities identified lack of funding and resources for local food initiatives as a key barrier.<sup>7</sup>

According to the Local Food Act, the term local food refers to food produced or harvested in Ontario, and subject to any limitations in the regulations, food and

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<sup>5</sup> Ontario. Legislative Assembly. "An Act to enact the Local Food Act, 2013 ..." Bill 36. 40th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2013. [Toronto]: The Assembly, 1997. (Assented to November 6, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Deloitte for the Ontario Municipal Knowledge Network (OMKN). (n.d.). Best Practices in Local Food. A guide for municipalities.

<sup>7</sup> Deloitte

beverages made in Ontario if they include ingredients produced or harvested in Ontario. This definition of local could be a challenge for the City of Thunder Bay, as many institutions deal with distributors based in Manitoba.

All long-term care homes in Ontario are governed by the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007<sup>8</sup>. The Act is designed to ensure that residents of long-term care homes receive safe, consistent, high-quality, resident-centred care. A key component of this Act relates to the nutrition care and dietary services. The Long-Term Care Homes Act states that every licensee of a long-term care home must ensure proposal nutrition care and hydration programs for residents, including the consultation with a registered dietitian. The nutrition care and dietary services program in each long-term care home includes: menu planning, food production, dining and snack service and availability of supplies and equipment for food production, dining and snack service.

Long-term care homes must ensure that there are a minimum of three meals daily, a between-meal beverage in the morning and afternoon as well as a beverage in the evening after dinner, and a snack in the afternoon and evening. Through these meals and snacks, the long-term care licensee must ensure the residents are provided with the necessary nutrients, fibre, and energy based on Dietary Reference Intakes and are provided as well as a variety of foods, including fresh seasonal foods each day from all food groups based on Canada's Food Guide.

In addition to meeting the nutritional needs of the residents, long-term care licensees are responsible for an organized food production system in the facility. The system must provide for a 24-hour supply of perishable and a three-day supply of non-perishable foods. Licensees must provide documentation of standardized recipes, preparation, menu substitutions, the number of meals prepared for persons who are not residents of the home; and the revenue and internal recoveries made by the licensee relating to the sale or provision of any food and beverage prepared in the home, including revenue and internal recoveries made from cafeteria sales and catering.

Long-term care homes employ a registered dietitian to carry out clinical and nutritional care duties and a nutrition manager to lead the nutrition care and dietary services program for the home. In addition, the home must employ a cook with chef training or culinary management diploma from a program that meets the standard established by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

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<sup>8</sup> Long-Term Care Homes Act. Ontario Regulations 79/10. (2007). The Ontario Gazette. Published March 31, 2010. Retrieved from: [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2010/elaws\\_src\\_regs\\_r10079\\_e.htm#BK81](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2010/elaws_src_regs_r10079_e.htm#BK81)

Similar to long term care homes, day cares and nurseries are subject to regulations regarding the meals and nutrition. The Day Nurseries Act, 1990<sup>9</sup> ensures that each child, one year of age or over, in attendance at meal time is provided with a meal of at least one serving from milk and milk products, one serving from meat and alternates, one serving from bread and cereals, and two servings from fruits and vegetables. Again, operators of a day nursery must post menu plans for the current and following week and plans must be retained by the operator for thirty days after the last day for which it is applicable. The City of Thunder Bay is able to use these records to monitor the purchasing and consumption of all food, including locally sourced, in day cares and long-term care homes. The monitoring process is valuable as it helps organizations or institutions determine the origin of the food they purchase. Once completed, the audit provides the purchaser a baseline from which to track its progress towards purchasing more local food. The basic process of a food origin audit is that the food manufacturer responsible for bringing an audited food to market is contacted and asked to provide details on the origin of the ingredient(s) in that food.<sup>10</sup>

Local food in health care, including long-term care homes, has been found to be socially, environmentally and economically beneficial<sup>11</sup>. Local food provide patients, staff and visitors with fresh, nutritious foods and provides an opportunity to promote and educate residents on healthy eating. The long-term care centres serve several meals a year and the occupancy rates in long-term care homes are stable.

One study completed by the University of Guelph found that long-term care facilities are in a strong position to use more local food in the future. In comparison to hospitals, a larger percent of food is currently prepared fresh in the facilities' well equipped kitchens. Long term care homes and day cares are capable of developing seasonal menus.

Community gardens are a common opportunity for local food production and consumption. In addition to the direct consumption of the food grown onsite, community gardens help to maintain a sense of community, address the issue of food insecurity, and promote local eating to the members of the community. Municipalities are able to provide land, equipment, and staff to support gardens on site of long-term care homes and day care centres. Further, community gardens have been found to be an excellent teaching opportunity for youth on healthy eating and health lifestyles and gardening has been used a form of therapy.

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<sup>9</sup> Day Nurseries Act. R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 262. Retrieved from: [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws\\_regs\\_900262\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_900262_e.htm)

<sup>10</sup> Hayley Lapalme, Elin Marley, Brendan Wylie-Toal. My Sustainable Canada & Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care, (2011). Conducting Food Origin Audits: a step-by-step guide

<sup>11</sup> Linda Varangu and Brendan Wylie-Toal, Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care. (2010). Assessing Opportunities for Local Food in Health Care.

The study completed for Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care found that health care institutions perceive the following as challenges with providing residents of long term care homes and day care centres:

- Seasonal availability of local food
- Added labour needed to prepare the food
- Lack of availability in some food groups
- Complying with regulations
- Cost to purchase.

### **City of Thunder Bay Policies and Initiatives**

The Official Plan is the principal land use policy document for the City of Thunder Bay<sup>12</sup>. It is a formal statement by Council of land use goals, objectives, and policies, intended for the guidance of public and private development decisions within the City of Thunder Bay. Municipal Official Plans and other planning policies and zoning by-laws can enable local food producers to maintain and grow their operations through prescriptive regulations. Municipalities can make local land use planning decisions that promote the protection of agricultural land and local food production. Section 16.9 of Thunder Bay's Official Plan (2002) states "permitted agricultural activities may include the growth or production of forage crops, grain and feed crops, vegetables, dairy animals and dairy products, livestock for food production, bees and apiary products, nursery and greenhouse products, poultry and poultry products, horses, forestry and market gardening produce". The existing official plan is currently under review, and therefore opportunities exist for the use of stronger language and policies supporting local food production to provide greater support for local food in the Thunder Bay Strategic Plan.

The Thunder Bay Strategic Plan focuses the City's efforts on making sure that over the next ten years, Thunder Bay is connected, healthy, vibrant and strong<sup>13</sup>. The City of Thunder Bay Strategic Plan identifies Goal 5 as a "caring, welcoming and inclusive City." Support for the development of a comprehensive local food strategy is an action (5.2 [b]) of Strategic Direction 5.2, which commits to "Respond to community needs to support a high quality of life for all residents." Goal 10 is to "Promote a more sustainable community recognizing that environment, economy, society and culture are linked through the implementation of the Community Environmental Action Plan." The CEAP recommends in Objective 5.1 that the City "use the Thunder Bay Food Charter to guide related decision-making and policy development within the city." It further elaborates the objective with the suggested action: "develop a community food security strategy."

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<sup>12</sup> City of Thunder Bay. (2002). Official Plan

<sup>13</sup> City of Thunder Bay 2011-2014. City of Thunder Bay Strategic Plan

Specific to food, the City of Thunder Bay has developed a Food Charter endorsing 5 principles (build community economic development; ensure social justice; foster population health; celebrate culture and collaboration; preserve environmental integrity) as the foundation of a food security framework for research, planning and policy and program development.<sup>14</sup>

Local food is highlighted in the Food Charter, including:

- Build Community Economic Development:
  - Prioritize production, preparation, storage, distribution and consumption of local food as an integral part of the Thunder Bay economy;
  - Develop collaborative urban and rural food security initiatives to sustain local agriculture and rural communities;
  - Support a regionally-based food system to enhance food security and self-reliance.
- Celebrate Culture and Collaboration
  - Protect and encourage access to wild foods obtained by fishing, hunting and gathering as they are an important part of northern culture
- Preserve Environmental Integrity
  - Encourage regional and local food self-reliance in order to reduce the use of fossil fuels and build sustainable communities.
  - Encourage food production methods that sustain or enhance natural environments and biological diversity, and that make effective and sustainable use of local resources.
  - Preserve and maintain local waters and agricultural lands and designate land and support for urban and community- based agriculture.

Following the Thunder Bay Food Charter the City of Thunder Bay initiated a Food Strategy in response to growth in the local food sector and an increase in concerns about where food comes from and how it reaches us. The Food Strategy is organized around the seven pillars of a sustainable food system:

1. Healthy school food environments
2. Forest and freshwater foods
3. Food access
4. Production and new farm mentorship
5. Distribution and processing
6. Institutional procurement
7. Urban agriculture

The goal of the Food Strategy is to ensure access to healthy food for all, to create food-friendly neighbourhoods that provide enough diverse sources of

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<sup>14</sup> City of Thunder Bay. (n.d.). Thunder Bay Food Charter

healthy food and opportunities for community to come together around food, to understand food as a human right, more than a commodity.

Most recently, the City of Thunder Bay with the Thunder Bay Federation of Agriculture and Thunder Bay District Health Unit led the project “Making the Connections for Public Sector Local Food Procurement”<sup>15</sup>. The project aims to increase the public sector’s (school boards, the university and college, health care providers, day cares, and homes for the aged) purchasing of local good by 2% annually. In addition, the project examined the capacity of local food producers to meet buyers’ needs.

### **Nova Scotia Study**

A study done in Nova Scotia found there are several reasons for developing and implementing a local food procurement policy, but of course there are challenges<sup>16</sup>. The most common is the real or perceived cost of purchasing and consuming local food. Additionally, food service contracts can discriminate against smaller scale suppliers due to the required quantities and variety of food. The Local Food Fund supports public sector led procurement policies. Local food procurement policies provide a consistent source of income for local producers, as it typically represents a significant percentage of local food purchasing in the community, but also showcase the municipality’s commitment to the local food industry.

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<sup>15</sup> Grey Bruce Centre for Agroecology. (2013). Making the Connections for Public Sector Local Food Procurement

<sup>16</sup> Nova Scotia Department of Energy. (2007). Local Food Procurement Policies: A Literature Review