



## CITY OF LANGLEY

### MOTION

#### Enhancing A Collaborative, Sustainable, and Inclusive Approach to Food Security and Well-being– Langley City

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**WHEREAS** food insecurity remains a critical issue in British Columbia, exacerbated by climate change, economic instability, and supply chain disruptions, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations, Indigenous communities, and socioeconomically disadvantaged regions; and

**WHEREAS** a resilient and inclusive food system requires sustained investment, cross-sector collaboration, and policies that integrate infrastructure development, technological innovation, cultural food systems, and community-driven approaches to ensure equitable access to nutritious food, economic resilience, and regional food security;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Province of British Columbia collaborate with municipalities to develop and implement a comprehensive food security and well-being strategy that ensures sustainable investment in local food systems, strengthens regional and provincial food networks, promotes innovation in agriculture and food technology, and enhances access to culturally appropriate, affordable, and nutritious food for all communities.

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## **Background:**

Food insecurity in British Columbia is a multifaceted challenge influenced by environmental, economic, and social factors. Addressing this issue requires a holistic approach that integrates technological innovation, infrastructure development, cultural preservation, and the promotion of mental health through connection to the land.

### **1. Connection to Land and Mental Health**

Engaging in activities such as gardening and harvesting has been shown to provide numerous mental health benefits:

- Stress Reduction: Interacting with nature through gardening can alleviate stress and promote relaxation.
- Enhanced Mood and Self-Esteem: Participating in gardening activities can improve mood and boost self-esteem.
- Community Cohesion: Collective gardening projects foster social interaction, reducing feelings of isolation and strengthening community bonds.

For Indigenous communities, a profound connection to the land is integral to cultural identity and well-being. Engaging in traditional land-based practices supports mental health and fosters a sense of belonging.

### **2. Socio-Economic Food Technology Innovation**

Advancements in agri-tech can significantly enhance food security by improving efficiency and sustainability in food production and distribution. Agri-technologies boost sector productivity, economic competitiveness, and sustainability, thereby reducing waste and tailoring production to market demands.

### **3. Infrastructure Investment and Funding**

Robust infrastructure is the backbone of a secure food system. The Province's investment of more than \$200 million aims to ensure better access to affordable, local food by enhancing food security infrastructure. Additionally, the Critical Food Infrastructure Grant, administered by United Way British Columbia in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, supports community-led food infrastructure projects, strengthening local food security across the province.

British Columbia's provincial and United Way food security funding can be optimized through strategic local collaboration that integrates innovation, policy, infrastructure, and community partnerships. Investing in agri-tech solutions like AI-driven supply chains, precision agriculture, and regenerative farming can enhance food production efficiency and sustainability.

Strengthening regional food hubs, urban agriculture, and processing infrastructure will expand local food access, reduce waste, and build resilient supply networks. By aligning municipal policies, Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives, and cross-sector partnerships, B.C. can create a sustainable, inclusive, and community-driven food ecosystem.

#### 4. Coordination and Best Practices

Effective coordination among various community partners and organizations is vital for a resilient food system. The BC Centre for Disease Control emphasizes the development of food security indicators to inform policy and practice, reflecting the impact of initiatives and identifying areas needing improvement. Sharing best practices through collaborative networks enables communities to adopt successful models and strategies tailored to their unique needs.

#### 5. Preserving Culturally and Socially Distinct Local Food Systems

Local food systems are essential to community identity, cultural heritage, and economic resilience, providing access to traditional and regionally significant foods. Indigenous Food Security and Food Sovereignty initiatives support Indigenous communities in achieving self-sufficient food systems, restoring traditional food practices, and increasing participation in sustainable agriculture, fishing, and land stewardship.

Similarly, diverse cultural communities, including immigrant, refugee, and socio-economically diverse populations, benefit from culturally inclusive food initiatives that preserve heritage-based food traditions while enhancing local economies. Investing in these unique systems strengthens regional and provincial food networks, fosters intercultural food exchange, and ensures that all communities—regardless of background or income—have access to nutritious, culturally relevant, and locally sourced food.

#### 6. Moving towards a comprehensive strategy that addresses food security and well-being

The Province of British Columbia has implemented several strategies addressing food security and well-being, though it does not have a single, unified comprehensive strategy encompassing both areas.

##### Food Security Initiatives:

- Public Health Framework: Food security is recognized as a core public health program under B.C.'s Guiding Framework for Public Health, aiming to ensure all residents have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food.
- Significant Investments: In 2023, the province committed over \$200 million to enhance food security, focusing on increasing the availability of affordable, local food.
- Poverty Reduction Strategy: Food security is a key component of *TogetherBC*, B.C.'s poverty reduction strategy seeks to reduce overall poverty by 25% and child poverty by 50% by 2024.

##### Well-Being and Mental Health Strategies:

- A Pathway to Hope: This roadmap outlines plans to transform mental health and addictions care in B.C., focusing on wellness promotion, prevention, and early intervention.
- Population and Public Health Framework: Released in 2024, this strategy outlines the long-term vision and strategic direction for promoting and protecting the health and well-being of all people in B.C.

While these initiatives address aspects of food security and well-being, there is an opportunity to **develop a more integrated, comprehensive strategy** that combines these elements to holistically enhance the quality of life for all British Columbians.

## **Conclusion:**

A comprehensive food security and well-being strategy for British Columbia must integrate socio-economic food technology innovations with coordinated infrastructure development, funding, and the preservation of culturally distinct local food systems.

By fostering collaboration among municipalities and the province, and investing in both technological advancements and cultural heritage, **British Columbia can build a resilient food system that enhances mental health, community well-being, and quality of life for all residents.**