

# A LOCAL FOOD NETWORK FOR THE TOWN OF NEW TECUMSETH

PREPARED BY: JENNIFER AIKMAN, NICOLE CUPOLO, NORA SALAMI  
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## KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Agriculture-Related Uses:** means those farm-related commercial and industrial uses that are directly related to farm operations in the area, support agriculture, benefit from being in close proximity to farm operations, and provide direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

**Agri-Tourism:** means those farm-related tourism uses, including limited accommodation such as a bed and breakfast, that promote the enjoyment, education or activities related to the farm operation (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

**Agricultural Uses:** means the growing of crops, including nursery, biomass, and horticultural crops; raising of livestock; raising of other animals for food, fur or fiber, including poultry and fish; aquaculture; apiaries; agro-forestry; maple syrup production; and associated on-farm buildings and structures, including, but not limited to livestock facilities, manure storages, value-retaining facilities, and accommodation for full-time farm labour when the size and nature of the operation requires additional employment. This definition shall not include a medical marijuana production facility (Town of New Tecumseth, 2021).

**Community Gardens:** means a parcel of land cultivated and gardened by members of the community for non-commercial purposes. For the purposes of this definition, “gardened” means to grow and care for plants and crops. Lands zoned for community gardens may include accessory buildings such as a tool shed, and non-commercial activities related to the community garden such as teaching (Town of New Tecumseth, 2021).

**Community Supported Agriculture (CSA):** means a system of growing and distributing organic produce that restores the link between farmers and the surrounding communities. Before the season starts, households purchase a "share" of the year's harvest from a local farm. CSA "shareholders" pay for their produce at the beginning of the growing season, providing the necessary start-up funds for farmers to purchase seeds, supplies and soil amendments. Throughout the growing season, each week subscribing member receives equal shares of the freshly harvested food from the farmer (Government of Alberta, 2012; Wheelbarrow Farms, n.d.).

**Farmers' Market:** means a building or premise where opened spaces or stalls or sale areas that are not separated by permanent walls (but may have removable partitions) and have a maximum area of 100 square meters, are leased, rented or otherwise provided to more than 3 individual vendors for the sale of products primarily of fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, as well as trees, shrubs, plants and flowers and a limited range of canned or preserved products or other food products requiring minimal processing such as maple syrup, cheese, butter, refreshments or baked goods to the general public, but shall not include a "supermarket" or a "specialty food store" (Town of New Tecumseth, 2021).

**Farm Operation:** means one or more lots utilized by a farm owner or operator for agricultural purposes (Town of New Tecumseth, 2021).

**Food Hub:** means a business or organization that facilitates the physical connections between small scale production and a larger market. This enables small farmers to expand production and pool resources with other

farmers to reach a greater production capacity and enter a larger, more stable market than they could otherwise be able to infiltrate (Food Secure Canada, n.d.).

**Local Food Network:** Local food networks seek to ensure that food is grown and processed as close as possible to those who are going to eat it. Local food networks seek to create communities of producers and consumers of local food and to support local food initiatives (Permaculture Association, n.d.).

**Local Food:** The *Local Food Act* (2013) defines local food as: “(a) food produced or harvested in Ontario, including forest or freshwater food, and (b) subject to any limitations in the regulations, food and beverages made in Ontario if they include ingredients produced or harvested in Ontario” (Local Food Act, 2013). In this report, the definition of local food is further refined to mean local food harvested and/or produced in the Town of New Tecumseth.

**On-Farm Diversified Uses:** means uses that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

**Prime Agriculture Areas:** means areas where prime agricultural lands predominate. This includes areas of prime agricultural lands and associated Canada Land Inventory Class 4 through 7 lands and additional areas where there is a local concentration of farms which exhibit characteristics of ongoing agriculture. Prime agricultural areas may be identified by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food using guidelines developed by the province as amended from time to time. A prime agricultural area may also be identified through an alternative agricultural land evaluation system approved by the province (Town of New Tecumseth, 2019).

**Settlement Areas:** means urban areas and rural settlements within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets) that are: built up areas where development is concentrated, and which have a mix of land uses; and lands which have been designated in an official plan for development in accordance with the policies of this Plan. Where there are no lands that have been designated for development, the settlement area may be no larger than the area where development is concentrated (Government of Ontario, 2020).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report offers a Local Food Network Framework and Action Plan for the Town of New Tecumseth to support local producers, enhance economic development, and strengthen food security.

### Study Objectives and Goals:

#### Goals

1. Identify best management practices for local food networks.
2. Provide policy recommendations to foster a sustainable local food network.
3. Deliver a food network framework that responds to community needs.

#### Objectives

- Conduct a jurisdictional scan of similar scale agricultural communities in Ontario that have established local food networks.
- Evaluate policy approaches, programs and tools, and compile examples of best practices.
- Research and summarize existing policies in the Town of New Tecumseth related to local food networks.
- Prepare and execute an engagement plan that provides opportunities for public and stakeholder input into the framework.
- Conduct a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis with input from key stakeholders.
- Develop a suite of policy recommendations and action plan.

This Executive Summary highlights the scope of each objective. The full report elaborates upon each objective and details the Local Food Network Framework and Action Plan.

#### Objective 1:

*Conduct a jurisdictional scan of similar scale agricultural communities in Ontario that have established local food networks.*

At the outset of the project, various local food networks in Ontario were researched to understand the context and help realize the potential of a local food network in New Tecumseth.

#### Objective 2:

*Evaluate policy approaches, programs and tools, and compile examples of best practices.*

Throughout the project, best practices of local food initiatives were identified and eventually referenced in the Local Food Network Framework and Action Plan. Although best practices are identified Canada-wide, most examples are situated in Ontario.

### **Objective 3:**

*Research and summarize existing policies in the Town of New Tecumseth related to local food networks.*

Various reviews were conducted for New Tecumseth related to its agricultural, legislative and policy contexts. This review helped recognize the various opportunities and constraints that exist for the Town in relation to the establishment of a local food network within the Ontario planning regime.

### **Objective 4:**

*Prepare and execute an engagement plan that provides opportunities for public and stakeholder input into the framework.*

Farmers/producers, the community, industry experts, and the Town of New Tecumseth were identified as key stakeholders for engagement. A stakeholder engagement protocol was designed to encourage participation among each group. Engagement efforts included an online survey, virtual workshop and key informant interviews.

### **Objective 5:**

*Conduct a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis with input from key stakeholders.*

The virtual workshop offered the opportunity to conduct a SWOT analysis among farmers and producers within and outside New Tecumseth boundaries. The informant interviews also informed the SWOT results.

### **Objective 6:**

*Develop a suite of policy recommendations and action plan.*

The Local Food Network Framework and Action Plan serve as a culmination of the data and input gathered through the public engagement. This input informed an issues analysis, with policy recommendations, actions, and best management practices identified to address each issue.

## Local Food Network Framework and Action Plan

The key issues have been summarized into the following 8 themes outlined below with summary recommendations for New Tecumseth. Detailed recommendations are provided in the report.

### Theme 1: Governance, Communications, and Coordination

**Issue:** Organizations involved in local food lack coordination and communication.

**Summary Recommendation:** Municipal leadership and a dedicated resource person are needed to coordinate a local food network.

### Theme 2: Land Use Policy and By-laws

**Issue:** Current agricultural land-use policies do not effectively protect and promote agriculture in New Tecumseth.

**Summary Recommendation:** Strengthen municipal policies to protect prime agricultural land from development and land speculation.

### Theme 3: Marketing, Promotion, and Agri-tourism

**Issue:** Farmers lack the resources and time to market their products and develop agri-tourism opportunities.

**Summary Recommendation:** Provide resources that guide farmers on advertising, marketing, and promoting local food.

### Theme 4: Local Food Infrastructure and Facilities

**Issue:** Current infrastructure limits production capacities within the agri-food sector.

**Summary Recommendation:** Support innovative solutions that meet the infrastructural demands of the agricultural sector.

### Theme 5: Financial Supports and Sustainable Farming Practices

**Issue:** High operational costs and lack of awareness and access to financial resources serve as barriers to entry which deter new farmers and threaten the viability of local farms in New Tecumseth.

**Summary Recommendation:** Strengthen public and private sector partnerships to improve access to funding supports for producers and agri-businesses.

### Theme 6: Food Access and Equity

**Issue:** Residents lack consistent and equitable access to local food.

**Summary Recommendation:** Promote collaborations within the agri-food sector that improves access to local food among all residents.

### Theme 7: Agricultural History and Food Cultural Connections

**Issue:** Residents feel disconnected from New Tecumseth's agricultural sector which limits participation in the local food system.

**Summary Recommendation:** Strengthen knowledge of local food initiatives to facilitate community participation.

### Theme 8: Agricultural Data

**Issue:** Local data on agri-food businesses, their locations, and trends in agricultural land use are limited.

**Summary Recommendation:** Enhance local agricultural datasets to better inform policy decisions and guide local food initiatives.

## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Town of New Tecumseth (referred to as “New Tecumseth” or “the Town” henceforth), located in the southern part of Simcoe County, is comprised of three distinct communities: Alliston, Beeton, and Tottenham in addition to the former Township of Tecumseth. These areas were incorporated to form the Town in 1991. Each settlement area is surrounded by rural landscapes that showcase the Town’s rich agriculture and production capacities. Characteristics such as these position the Town to establish a local food network. This type of initiative seeks to benefit all residents in New Tecumseth by enhancing their place-based connection and providing access to healthy, affordable, local food.

In January 2023, The Town of New Tecumseth collaborated with the University of Guelph to help realize and guide the development of a local food network within the municipality. Three masters’ students in the School of Rural Planning and Development served as project leads and liaised with a senior development planner in New Tecumseth to complete the project.

This project delivers a Local Food Network Framework and Action Plan to guide the municipality in developing a local food network. These recommendations build upon existing policies contained within the New Tecumseth’s Official Plan (2019) and the Economic Development Strategic Plan (2017) and will inform New Tecumseth’s Community Climate Action Plan and Official Plan update. Prescriptions within this report will help foster community engagement, improve economic vitality, increase food security, and support the community’s climate action goals.

## LOCAL FOOD NETWORK: FROM CONCEPT TO REALIZATION

**What is local food?** Local food has been defined in this report to mean food harvested and/or produced in New Tecumseth. The concept of what is “local” implies a sense of community, and community identity, which is the foundation of a local food network (Environmental Protection Agency, 2017).

**Why a local food network?** The production, sale, and consumption of food within New Tecumseth helps establish a self-reliant, resilient food system while improving connections between producers, processors, retailers, and consumers. Local food networks take many forms. Initiatives may include farmers’ markets, pick-your-own, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) food boxes, and improved sourcing of local goods in restaurants, grocery stores, community institutions (e.g., schools), and local shops. The success of a local food network depends upon the involvement and engagement of each individual contributing to the system. Therefore, a local food network must take a form that best serves all stakeholders along the agricultural value-supply chain.

## BENEFITS OF A LOCAL FOOD NETWORK

### ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The agri-food sector supports the economic vitality of New Tecumseth. A local food network creates new opportunities for farmers, businesses, and entrepreneurs to enhance this important sector. Strengthened connections leads to a diversified local food market. Purchasing local foods stimulates the local economy by investing in familiar producers while also creating job opportunities. Additionally, a local food network helps to address food insecurity and improve food programs at institutions such as food banks, schools, and hospitals.

### SOCIAL BENEFITS

An important outcome of a local food network is the relationships created among producers, retailers, and consumers. These relationships are built upon unified goals of supporting the local economy, producing, and consuming nutritious foods, and establishing a strong sense of community. Other social benefits include strengthened knowledge of local food producers and industries, expanded market opportunities for local agri-food businesses, a celebration of the town's agricultural legacy and increased reliance on locally sourced foods year-round.

### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Localizing food systems actively supports the municipality in accomplishing its climate goals once established through the Community Climate Action Plan. Carbon footprints are reduced when the sector reduces its reliance upon fuel to ship, import and purchase food. Consistent community support encourages producer adoption of sustainable practices, which includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions through various tools and techniques.



## PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### GOALS

1. Identify best management practices for local food networks.
2. Provide policy recommendations to foster a sustainable local food network.
3. Deliver a food network framework that responds to community needs.

### OBJECTIVES

- Conduct a jurisdictional scan of similar scale agricultural communities in Ontario that have established local food networks.
- Evaluate policy approaches, programs and tools, and compile examples of best practices.
- Research and summarize existing policies in the Town of New Tecumseth related to local food networks.
- Prepare and execute an engagement plan that provides opportunities for public and stakeholder input into framework.
- Conduct a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis with input from key stakeholders.
- Develop a suite of policy recommendations and action plan.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

### PHASE 1: PROJECT INITIATION – JANUARY 2023-FEBRUARY 2023

During Phase 1, the project leads completed a comprehensive review of provincial legislation and provincial and municipal policy related to local food networks, evaluated examples of similar-scale agricultural communities in Ontario that have established local food networks, and identified best practices.

### PHASE 2: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT – FEBRUARY 2023-MARCH 2023

During Phase 2, New Tecumseth and the project leads undertook strategic engagement with the community to seek input on the design of the Local Food Network Framework and Action Plan.

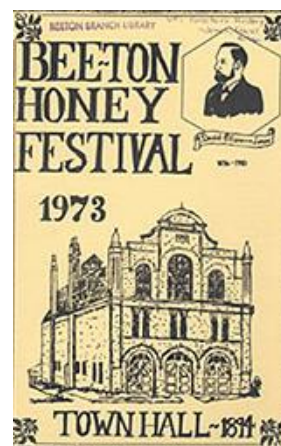
### PHASE 3: DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN – MARCH 2023-APRIL 2023

During Phase 3, the project leads developed a Local Food Network Framework and Action Plan based on the findings from Phase 2. The Framework and Action Plan are designed to reflect the findings and needs of the community.

## AGRICULTURE IN NEW TECUMSETH

## AGRICULTURAL HISTORY OF NEW TECUMSETH

New Tecumseth has a rich agricultural history, with farming dating back to the early 1800s (Mestern, n.d.). The Town grew as a commercial center for farmers in the region, and its agricultural roots are celebrated today with the annual Alliston Potato Festival, the Beeton Honey and Garden Festival, and the Beeton Fall Fair (by the Beeton Agricultural Society), which is among the oldest agricultural fall fairs in the country (APF, n.d; Beeton Fair, n.d.) The Village of Beeton gained recognition for its large-scale manufacturing and commercial honey production. Beeton was recognized as the birthplace of Canadian commercial honey due to the beekeeping and honey business endeavors by David A. Jones in the 1880s (New Tecumseth, n.d.). Meanwhile, the Village of Tottenham was located 40 kilometers Northwest of Toronto on prime agricultural land, making it ideal for growth and development of the Canadian National Railway and Canadian Pacific Railway stations (Tottenham, n.d.).



Source: Beeton Honey & Garden Festival, n.d.

## A SNAPSHOT OF THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY IN NEW TECUMSETH

### AGRICULTURE SYSTEMS OVERVIEW

The agricultural data outlined in this section analyzes datasets retrieved from the Agricultural Systems Portal for agricultural producers, land uses, and other key agri-food network elements (OMAFRA, 2021). The Agriculture Systems Portal is an effective tool to inform land-use decisions, map agricultural land uses, and provide economic data on various agricultural sectors. Based on this dataset, New Tecumseth has one abattoir, a provincially licensed dairy plant, and a feed mill. There is one agricultural machinery retailer and a pesticide/fertilizer retailer (OMAFRA, 2021).

While the portal includes several agricultural maps and datasets, it does not provide a complete inventory of producers in New Tecumseth. A map that precisely locates cash crops and agri-food businesses would have been useful. However, the data available on the portal is limited in scope, which explains the absence of maps and other significant agricultural data in this section.

### AGRICULTURAL CENSUS

Ontario is a major agricultural contributor in Canada. The province has the highest proportion of farms and operators in the country (Chen, 2022). According to the results of the 2021 Census of Agriculture, the province accounts for more than 25% of operating farms and almost 8% of the total farm area in Canada (Chen, 2022). However, farmland decline in Ontario has been significant. According to the 2021 Census of Agriculture, farmland loss in Ontario has accelerated from a rate of 175 to 319 acres per day (OFLT, 2022). In Simcoe County, the trend is similar. Between 2006 and 2021, the amount of agricultural land use decreased by 9.4%, from 533,753 to 483,350 acres (Census of Agriculture, 2021).

The total number of farms in New Tecumseth increased by 28% between 2016 and 2021, from 156 (46,082 acres) to 199 farms (68,635 acres). Within those years, there was also a significant increase in farm size for medium and large-scale agricultural operations<sup>1</sup>. Overall, the farm size has increased, which indicates that large-scale farms are expanding, while smaller-scale operations have stayed constant (Figure 1).

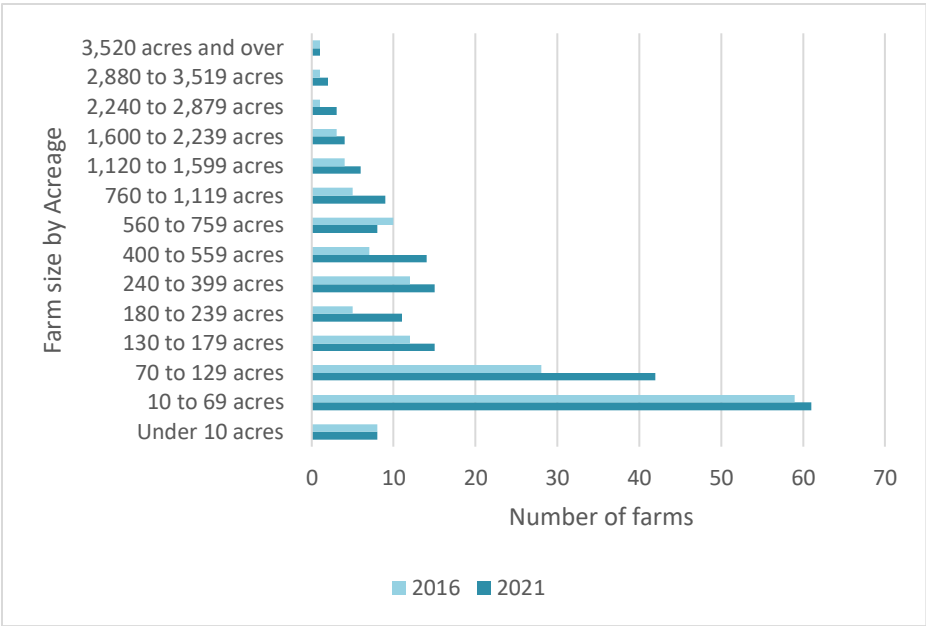


Figure 1. Farm business size by acreage in New Tecumseth. Source: Census of Agriculture (2021).

**FARMS BY INDUSTRY GROUP**

Oilseed and grain farms predominate in New Tecumseth and have increased by 61% from 2016 to 2021. Animal production was the second largest industry in 2016 but declined by 27% over the census period. Crop farming is now the second largest industry in New Tecumseth by number of farms. In 2021, crop production increased by 54%, totaling 61,744 acres (Census of Agriculture, 2021).

Over the census period, there have been increases in other farm industries including greenhouse and nurseries, vegetable and melon farming, dairy cattle and milk farming, and beef farming (Figure 2).

<sup>1</sup> Farms within the 70-to-129-acre range experienced a 50% increase in acreage, while larger scale farms (ranging from 760 to 3,519 acres) saw an increase between 80-200%. However, smaller scale farms with 10 to 69 acres only saw a modest increase of 3.39%, while those with less than 10 acres remained stable.



Figure 2. Farms by industry group. Source: Census of Agriculture (2021).

## MAJOR FIELD CROPS

New Tecumseth's principal field crops are soybeans, potatoes, feed corn, winter wheat and hay. New Tecumseth potatoes account for 32% of the province's potato production, with land in potato farming increasing by 175% between 2016 and 2021 (Figure 3).

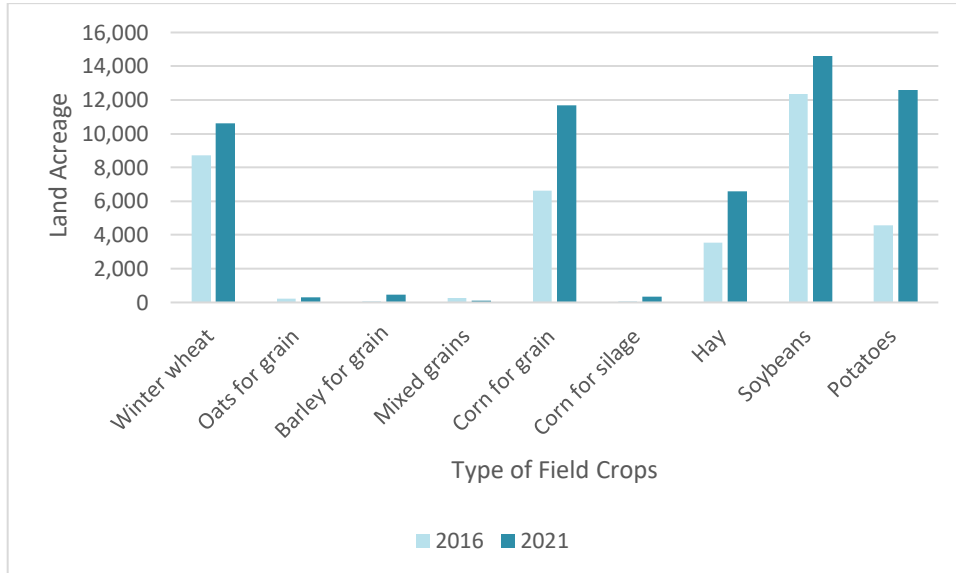


Figure 3. Major field crops by land acreage. Source: Census of Agriculture (2021).

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## OTHER AGRICULTURAL USES IN NEW TECUMSETH

Although New Tecumseth is less well-known for producing fruit, fruit crops increased from 19 to 40 acres over the census period, with apple production emerging during this time.

The total number of vegetable crops in acreage grew by 3% with green peas production increasing from 2 to 101 acres, whereas sweet corn production decreased by 67%.

In the livestock industry, cattle and calves declined by 32%. Steers also had a substantial reduction of 93% from 2016 to 2021. Throughout those years, however, the total number of sheep and lambs grew by 22%.

Although the total number of hens and chickens was not captured in the 2016 census data, 64,661 were reported in 2021. Turkey farming is very limited in New Tecumseth; the number of turkeys in the municipality has decreased by 83% since 2016, with just 26 turkeys recorded.

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## TOTAL GROSS FARM RECEIPTS

Over the last census period, the number of farms reporting less than \$10,000 in gross farm receipts has increased by 12% (Figure 4). Meanwhile, those within the \$10,000 - \$49,999 range experienced a decline. Farms with greater gross farm receipts (\$50,000-\$999,999) increased from 24% to 67%.

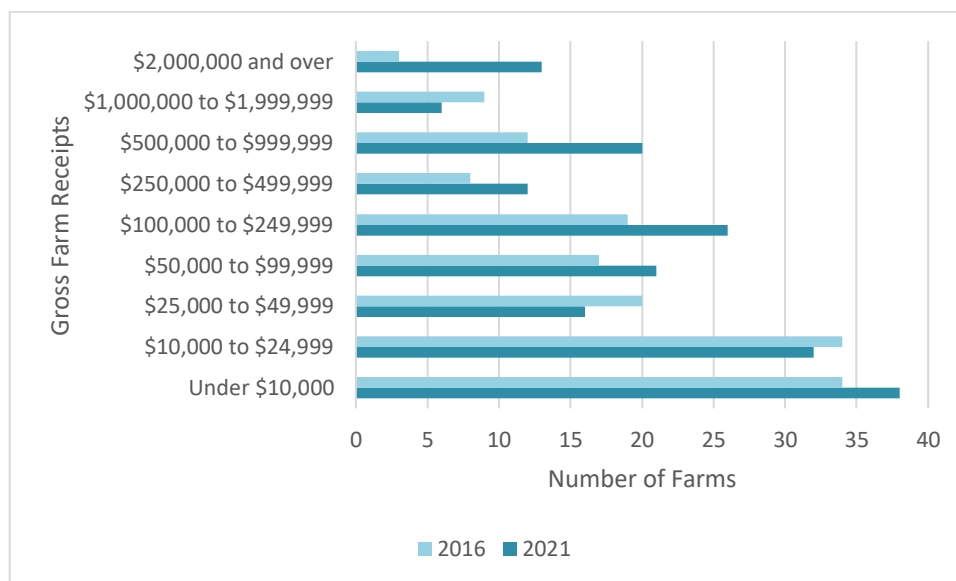


Figure 4. Total Gross Farm Receipts in New Tecumseth. Source: Census of Agriculture (2021).

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## FARM CAPITAL VALUE

Between 2016 and 2021, farm enterprises with less than \$200,000 in farm capital value decreased by 86%, while those with more than \$1,000,000 increased by 85% (Figure 5). Based on the growth in farm acreage and land

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use for cash crops, there may be a correlation between the reduction in smaller-scale agricultural operations and an increase in large-scale producers.

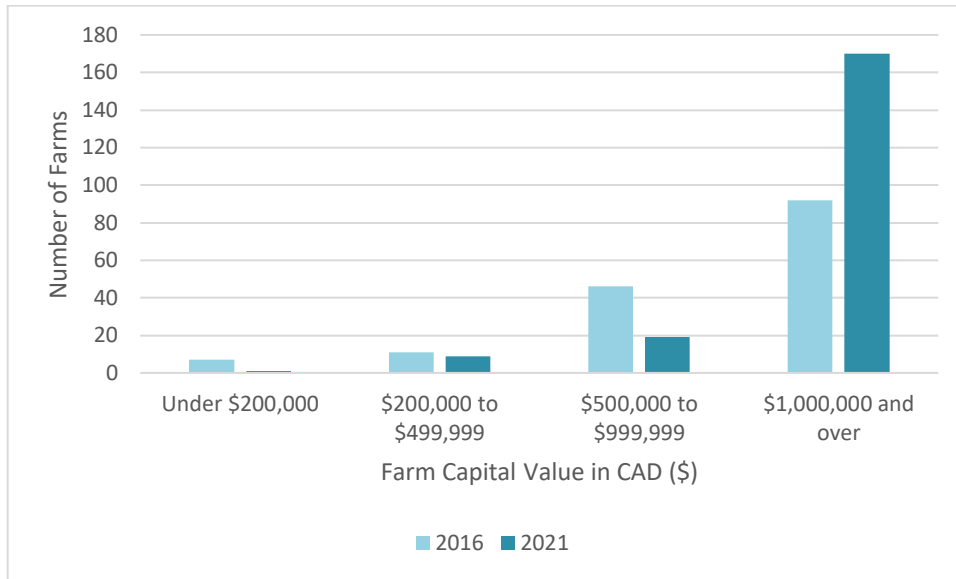


Figure 5. Farm Capital Value in Canadian Dollars reported by farm businesses. Source: Census of Agriculture (2021).

## EMPLOYMENT IN AGRI-FOOD

Agri-food businesses include primary agriculture, food and beverage manufacturing, crop, and animal production support services, dairy product manufacturing, and food and beverage stores (Census, 2021). According to the census, 70% of agri-food businesses operate without employees; suggesting these businesses are owner staffed and operated. Most businesses have a small number of employees (1-4), while 190 businesses employ 5-9 employees, and 105 businesses employ 10-19 employees.



## LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

### KEY PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION

This section summarizes the key pieces of legislation that are relevant to the establishment of a local food network in New Tecumseth.

#### PLANNING ACT

The *Planning Act* (1990) ensures that land use planning in the province is directed by provincial policy and that matters of provincial interest are addressed in municipal planning decisions. Section 2 of the *Act* defines the matters of provincial interest which relate to local food systems including: (b) the protection of agricultural resources, (h) the development of healthy communities, and (s) the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions. Section 3(1) of the *Act* enables the province to issue policy statements directing matters related to municipal planning that are of interest to the province which provides the legal basis for the Provincial Policy Statement (2020). The *Planning Act* establishes and defines the responsibilities of upper-tier and lower-tier municipalities in establishing official plans and zoning by-laws governing land use within their jurisdictions to support implementation of provincial interests in planning at the local level (*Planning Act*, 1990).

#### PLACES TO GROW ACT

The *Places to Grow Act* (2005) is legislation that enables the province to develop plans for integrated growth planning across municipal boundaries. This *Act* provides the legislative authority for the A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) which includes New Tecumseth (Government of Ontario, 2020; *Places to Grow Act*, 2005).

#### OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ CONSERVATION ACT

The *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act* (2001) enables the province to establish the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP) which sets provincial policy governing land use in the Oak Ridges Moraine Area (Government of Ontario, 2017; *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act*, 2001). The *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act* defines the Oak Ridges Moraine Area which includes the south-western most portion of New Tecumseth and encompasses lands in the vicinity of Tottenham.

The *Act* sets high-level objectives for the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan which are focused on protecting the ecological and hydrological integrity of the area by allowing only compatible land and resource use (Government of Ontario, 2017). Section 5 (c) prohibits official plans and zoning by-laws from containing clauses that are more restrictive than those in the plan, including for agricultural uses.

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## FARMING AND FOOD PRODUCTION PROTECTION ACT

The *Farming and Food Production Protection Act* (1998) provides legislative protections for normal farm practices to guard farmers against nuisance complaints and to ensure that agricultural practices are “promoted and protected” in agricultural areas. This legislation helps protect local food by preserving agricultural uses and practices in areas where there are conflicting adjacent land uses including at the urban-rural fringe. The legislation allows farmers to make applications to the board if a municipal by-law affects their ability to farm (*Farming and Food Production Protection Act*, 1998).

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## LOCAL FOOD ACT

The *Local Food Act* (2013) was established to foster local food systems and raise awareness about local food in Ontario by encouraging the development of new markets. The definition of local food in the legislation includes “food produced or harvested in Ontario” and “food and beverages made in Ontario if they include ingredients produced or harvested in Ontario” (*Local Food Act*, 2013). The Act establishes a “Local Food Week” as the first week of June and defines goals related to local food including: increased food literacy, increased use of local food by public sector organizations, and increasing access to local food. The legislation requires that the Ontario Ministry of Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) report annually on the progress related to provincial goals related to local food. Since this legislation was established under the Liberal Government, the province is no longer producing annual reports and has archived this section of OMAFRA’s webpage as this does not appear to be priority for the current administration.

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## RESOURCE RECOVERY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACT

The *Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act* (2016) defines the provincial interest in waste reduction and places responsibility on producers to reduce waste associated with their products and packaging. The goal is to achieve zero waste and zero greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector (*Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act*, 2016). A local food network can contribute to achieving these provincial goals related to waste reduction and climate change mitigation.

## PROVINCIAL POLICY AND PLANS

There are four key provincial policies and plans that apply to municipal planning in New Tecumseth<sup>2</sup>:

1. Provincial Policy Statement, 2020
2. A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020
3. Greenbelt Plan, 2017
4. Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, 2017

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<sup>2</sup> This document serves as a point-in-time report. It is acknowledged that the planning regime in Ontario is subject to change. In any case, the Town must remain consistent with future legislation and policy authorized by the province.

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## PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides direction to local governments on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development in accordance with the *Planning Act* (Planning Act, 1990; PPS, 2020).

**Section 1.7.1** (i) of the PPS identifies the provision of local food and agri-food networks as being key elements to ensuring the viability of the agricultural system and the prosperity of the province (PPS, 2020, p.22).

**Sections 1.1.4 and 1.1.5** set policies for rural areas and rural lands, directing growth to settlement areas. The PPS defines the permitted uses on rural lands which allows for expanded uses beyond the scope of agricultural uses permitted in prime agricultural areas.

**Section 2.3** sets the provincial policies in respect of agriculture and agricultural lands. Section 2.3.2 requires planning authorities to designate prime agricultural areas and encourages an “agricultural system approach” to enhance connections to the “agri-food network” (PPS, 2020, p.26). An agricultural system is defined as a system of elements that create a viable sector and made up of two components: the agricultural land base and the agri-food “network” which includes the infrastructure, services, and assets important to the viability of the sector.

**Section 2.3.3** addresses permitted uses in prime agricultural areas which include three categories: agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses. On-farm diversified uses are defined in the PPS to mean “uses that are secondary to the agricultural use of the property” and can include agri-tourism uses and “other uses that that produce value-added agricultural products” (PPS, 2020, p.48).

OMAFRA has published the *Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas* (OMAFRA, 2016) to assist with the consistent interpretation of the PPS policies related to permitted uses on agricultural lands including on-farm diversified uses (Geerts, 2016).

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## A PLACE TO GROW: GROWTH PLAN FOR THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE (GROWTH PLAN)

The Growth Plan is a provincial plan established under the *Places to Grow Act* (2005), that enables the province to develop plans for integrated growth planning across municipal boundaries.

The Growth Plan builds on the PPS to establish a land use planning framework for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) area that supports growth and emphasizes “complete communities” that are mixed, compact, and designed to support the needs of residents at all ages including “access to local and healthy food” (GGHP, 2020, p.10). The Growth Plan includes land use policies that apply to municipalities within the GGH, including New Tecumseth.

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The plan articulates a vision for the GGH that includes reference to vibrant areas that foster community health agricultural areas that will provide “healthy, local food for future generations” (GGHP, 2020, p.4). This emphasis is underscored in the growth management policies under Section 2.2.1 that supports the “creation of complete communities through expanded access to healthy, local, and affordable food” (GGHP, 2020, p.14).

Section 4.2.6 stipulates the policies for the agricultural system which encourage municipalities to implement regional strategies to support access to “healthy, local, and affordable food, urban and near-urban agriculture, food system planning and promoting the sustainability of agricultural, agri-food, and agri-product businesses while protecting agricultural resources while minimizing land use conflicts” (GGHP, 2020, p.46).

Section 4.2.10 encourages municipalities to identify actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that include promoting local food and food security (GGHP, 2020, p.52).

Section 6 of the GGHP provides specific direction for the Simcoe sub-area that provides growth forecasts and directs that growth to the lower-tier municipalities that contain primary settlement areas. In New Tecumseth, Alliston is defined as a primary settlement area (GGHP, 2020, Schedule 8, p.104).

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## **OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ CONSERVATION PLAN**

The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2017) was established originally in 2002 pursuant to the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act* to direct land use to protect sensitive ecological and hydrological features. The lands within the plan areas are also subject to the Greenbelt Plan. The plan defines four land use designations for the moraine including Natural Core Areas, Natural Linkage Areas, Countryside Areas, and Settlement Areas. The area of the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan that overlaps with New Tecumseth includes Natural Linkage and Countryside designations and includes Tottenham as a Rural Settlement.

The plan supports agricultural uses in all designations and emphasizes connections to the agricultural system and networks outside the plan area (as defined within the PPS). This has implications for New Tecumseth, as the agricultural lands within the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan area contribute to the agricultural network within the Town and beyond.

In the Natural Core and Natural Linkage Areas, on-farm diversified uses and agriculture-related uses are only permitted in prime agricultural areas. In Countryside Areas, these uses are not limited to prime agricultural lands. The plan also allows for small-scale commercial and other uses in the Countryside Areas but these uses are prohibited in prime agricultural areas and other areas designated for agricultural uses within an official plan. Section 34 of the plan further states that uses within the plan should be compatible with agriculture.

The creation of new lots in the plan area is restricted except for within the Rural Settlements and Settlement Areas.

## OFFICIAL PLANS

### SIMCOE COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

The Simcoe County Official Plan was approved in December 2016 and updated in February 2023 to consolidate six amendments approved since the 2016 process. As the upper-tier municipality, Simcoe County’s Official Plan policies apply to New Tecumseth.

Table 1 summarizes the policies that apply in the context of a local food network for New Tecumseth.

**Table 1. Simcoe County Official Plan Policies Supporting Local Food.**

<p><b>3.1 Growth Management</b></p>	<p>3.1.1 Directs growth to the settlement areas, with an emphasis on growth being focussed within the Prime Settlement Areas which includes Alliston.</p> <p>3.1.2 Enables resource-based development including for agriculture and tourism but does not include specifics about how agricultural development is supported.</p> <p>This section outlines the projections for growth for New Tecumseth for 2031:</p> <table data-bbox="581 1075 1250 1213"> <tr> <td>Population:</td> <td>56,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Employment:</td> <td>26,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Intensification target:</td> <td>40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Density target:</td> <td>50 (residents and jobs/hectares)</td> </tr> </table> <p>Note: Along with Innisfil, New Tecumseth has the highest population projection within Simcoe County.</p>	Population:	56,000	Employment:	26,500	Intensification target:	40%	Density target:	50 (residents and jobs/hectares)
Population:	56,000								
Employment:	26,500								
Intensification target:	40%								
Density target:	50 (residents and jobs/hectares)								
<p><b>3.3 General Development Policies</b></p>	<p>3.3.1 Deals with lot creation in rural and agricultural lands defining when second dwelling units are permitted including for seasonal farm help and other temporary accommodations.</p> <p>3.3.3 Prohibits consents to create separate lots for second dwelling units on agricultural and rural lands.</p> <p>3.3.6 Discourages lot creation for infrastructure in agricultural designated areas.</p>								
<p><b>3.6 Agricultural Designated Lands</b></p>	<p>The objectives for the agricultural designated lands emphasise the importance of supporting agriculture in prime agricultural areas by minimizing conflicts and by accommodating “uses and facilities which support the agricultural community” (p.37).</p>								

	<p>The official plan includes the objective to support a “diversified agricultural economy” and <b>“promote a sustainable local food system that enhances opportunities...to deliver products locally.”</b> (p.37)</p> <p>3.6.6 Outlines permitted uses within the agricultural designation, and this includes: agricultural uses, agricultural-related uses, <b>on-farm diversified uses, and “agricultural produce sales outlets generally marketing production from the local area.”</b> (p.38)</p> <p>This section emphasises the importance of prime agricultural areas (3.6.9) and limits development (3.6.10), re-designation (3.6.11) and non-agricultural uses (3.6.12).</p>
<b>3.7 Rural Designated Lands</b>	<p>The rural designated land policies describe that lands within the rural designation are to be the focus of agricultural and rural land uses. Policy 3.7.4 outlines what uses are permitted within the rural designation. These policies are more permissive than what is permitted on agricultural designated lands.</p>
<b>5.1 Land Use Designations</b>	<p>Schedule 5.1 includes the land use designations for agricultural use and rural use.</p>

The agricultural policies within the Simcoe County Official Plan support local food both as an overall objective and through supportive permitted uses. Simcoe County has taken initiative to invest in developing local food and food security. In 2017, the county funded the development of the Simcoe County Food Security Framework to guide coordinated actions to address food security in the community (Eco-Ethnomics, 2019). Two key recommendations from the report include establishing a Simcoe County Food Council and provide centralized coordination through a coordinator position. The “Food Coordinator” is funded through the Social and Community Investment Fund and supports the efforts of the Food Council (County of Simcoe, n.d.). Simcoe County has also developed an agri-tourism toolkit to provide guidance to farmers considering adding an agri-tourism component to their farms (County of Simcoe, n.d.).

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**NEW TECUMSETH OFFICIAL PLAN**

In August 2019, New Tecumseth released an updated Official Plan to guide the development of lands within the municipality through to 2031. The Official Plan’s vision emphasizes the municipality’s “small town character” and the importance of protecting and celebrating its agricultural and rural heritage (New Tecumseth Official Plan, 2019, p.6).

The Official Plan sets the goal for growth and settlement to be directed to the Settlement Areas of Alliston, Beeton, and Tottenham with a focus on Alliston as a Primary Settlement Area under the Growth Plan. During the Official Plan review phase, the public expressed an interest to see the focus of growth within and around

existing settlement areas, and that “growth should not take over viable farmland” (Town of New Tecumseth, 2018).

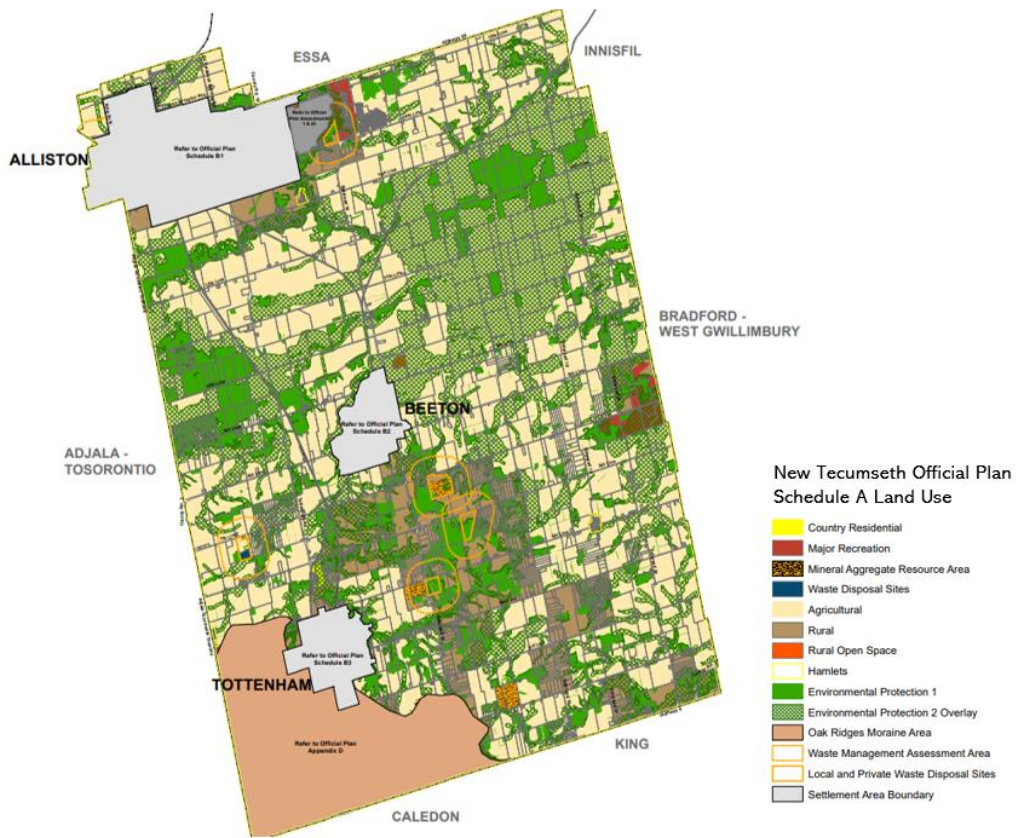
The Town of New Tecumseth has a total area of 27,500 hectares with 51% (14,000 hectares) in agricultural designation and 13% (3,700 hectares) in rural designation. Lands with the agricultural designation are where prime agricultural lands predominate and consist of lands with Class 1, 2 or 3 soils under the Canada Land Inventory (ibid, p.77). See Figure 6 for the land use designations in New Tecumseth.

Under Section 2.3 Role and Function of the Rural/Agricultural Areas, the goal is to “...protect, maintain and enhance the rural character of lands outside the Settlement Areas” (ibid, p.8). Key objectives supporting a local food network include:

- (i) ensure that agriculture remains an integral part of the economy of the town.
- (iii) encourage agricultural uses and other on-farm diversified uses.
- (vi) restrict development that requires the expansion of municipal services into the Rural/Agricultural Area,
- (vii) direct urban land uses to the Settlement Areas; and
- (xi) promote environmentally sensitive and sustainable farm practices.

Section 6.0 provides policies for the Rural/Agricultural Area including agricultural designation under 6.2.1. The key objectives of the agricultural designations are to:

- (iv) promote the agricultural industry and associated activities and enhance their capacity to contribute to the economy of the town.
- (v) preserve and promote the agricultural character of the town.



**Figure 6. New Tecumseth Official Community Plan Schedule A Land Use**

Permitted uses within the agricultural designation include agricultural uses and accessory agricultural use, agricultural related uses, agricultural research and training establishments, accessory residential uses on farm properties, bed and breakfasts, conservation uses, agri-tourism uses, home occupations, on-farm diversified uses (OFDUs), and other recreation and resource management uses.

These policies support key elements to support farm viability, diversification, and provision of local food. This includes policies related to OFDUs allowing small-scale production and processing facilities, and the accessory retail sale of products, as well as support for agri-tourism uses and agriculture-related uses to provide services and products to farm operations (Town of New Tecumseth, 2019).

Table 2 summarizes the other sections of the Official Plan that support elements of a local food network.

**Table 2. Other Official Plan Policies Supporting Local Food**

<p><b>Section 2.4 Economic Development</b></p>	<p>(vi) encourage compatible home-based businesses</p> <p>(vii) encourage protection of town’s rural character to ensure that the recreational and tourism uses continue to thrive.</p> <p>(xi) support a diversified agricultural economy including opportunities for younger farmers and new agri-businesses.</p>
<p><b>Section 2.6 Recreation, Parks, Open Spaces and Cultural Facilities</b></p>	<p>(i) encourage a healthy community made up of an interconnected system of open spaces, walking trails, bicycle routes, and natural heritage features.</p>
<p><b>Section 2.8 Natural Heritage Features</b></p>	<p>(xix) encourage agricultural operations to use best management practices to protect natural heritage features.</p>
<p><b>Section 3.0 Growth Management</b></p>	<p>Rural/agricultural growth projections: 2016 6,558 2031 8,185</p>
<p><b>Section 4.6 Oak Ridges Moraine</b></p>	<p>4.6.11.2 Natural Linkage Area</p> <p>Permitted uses include: (iii) agricultural uses, (viii) on-farm diversified uses in accordance with the ORMCP, (ix) agricultural uses in accordance with the ORMCP and policies and uses of this Official Plan, (xiv) uses accessory to agricultural uses (subject to policies of the Official Plan).</p>
<p><b>Section 5.3 Urban Commercial</b></p>	<p>5.3.3 Downtown Core Transitional Designation Public Service Facilities: “(ii) priority given to maintain and adapting existing public service facilities and spaces as community hubs...” (p.64).</p>

**NEW TECUMSETH ZONING BY-LAWS**

In September 2021, New Tecumseth approved a new comprehensive zoning by-law defining the permitted uses on lands within the Town to implement the Official Plan (Town of New Tecumseth, 2021). The public engagement process that informed the development of the zoning by-law sought input on uses in agricultural areas. The feedback reflected a general preference to facilitate small home industries and illustrated a desire for farm protection and local food (The Planning Partnership, 2020):

*“Need to protect our farms.”*

*“We should support small local farms...fostering a culture of locally sourced food.”*

*“Chickens should be allowed in town.”*

Applicable zoning by-laws are summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3. New Tecumseth Zoning By-Laws Related to Agriculture and Agri-Food**

<b>2.1 Accessory Uses</b>	2.1.2 Allows a “help house” as an accessory use to an agricultural use in the Agricultural 1 (A1) Zone, Agricultural Two (A2) Zone or the Oak Ridges Moraine – Countryside Rural (ORM CS-RL) Zone with certain restrictions.
<b>2.19 Parking Regulations</b>	2.19.10 Outlines minimum parking requirements for agricultural uses including farmers’ markets.
<b>2.34 Residential Areas – Livestock Prohibited</b>	Prohibits livestock, including poultry, within any urban residential or communally serviced residential zone.
<b>3.2 Neighborhood Supporting Zones</b>	Permits uses that may support public food connections including maker spaces, restaurants, public service facilities, and retail uses.
<b>3.4 Downtown Zones</b>	The following uses that support local food are permitted in the downtown commercial zones (DCC, DBC): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Farmers’ Market</li> <li>▪ Maker Spaces</li> <li>▪ Manufacturing Facility (includes a retail or hospitality component)</li> <li>▪ Restaurants</li> <li>▪ Service Facilities</li> </ul>
<b>3.7 Greenlands Zones</b>	Existing agricultural uses are permitted in the Environmental Protection (EP) Zone and Oak Ridges Moraine Environmental Protection (ORM EP) Zone.
<b>3.8 Rural Zones</b>	The Rural Industrial Zone (RI) permits abattoirs, fertilizer plants, machinery and equipment sales and service, manufacturing, processing and warehousing facilities, and truck cartage terminals.  The Rural Highway Commercial (RHC) Zone permits auction centres, feed and agricultural supply, and farmers’ markets.
<b>3.9 Agricultural Zones</b>	The following agricultural and agri-tourism uses are permitted in A1, A2 and ORM zones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agricultural uses</li> <li>▪ Bed and breakfast facilities</li> </ul> <p>The Special Study Area (SSA) permits non-intensive agricultural uses.</p>

While on-farm diversified uses are included in the zoning by-law definitions, and supported by the official plan policies, the zoning by-laws do not address on-farm diversified uses.

## ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Robust stakeholder engagement helps guide the creation of a local food network. Throughout this initiative, stakeholders were engaged using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. An overview and evaluation of each engagement tool is provided below. Data gleaned from the stakeholder engagement initiatives helped inform the Local Food Network Framework and Action Plan.

## TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS

Specific individuals and groups were identified as key stakeholders for engagement. Table 4 categorizes the stakeholders into the following groups: farmer/producer, the community, industry experts, and the Town of New Tecumseth. Each stakeholder group was subject to a specific engagement protocol, tailored to the level of engagement being sought.

The information collected throughout the engagement process was analyzed and the findings from this analysis informed the development of the Local Food Network Framework and Action Plan.

**Table 4. Key Stakeholder Engagement Protocol.**

Key Stakeholder	Engagement Protocol
Farmer/Producer	Survey Workshop
The Community	Survey
Industry Experts	Key Informant Interviews
Town of New Tecumseth	Key Informant Interviews



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

This section outlines the approach to stakeholder engagement including the materials, tools, engagement methods, and stakeholder identification and engagement approach. The limitations are also summarized. Figure 7 outlines the engagement steps and timeline.

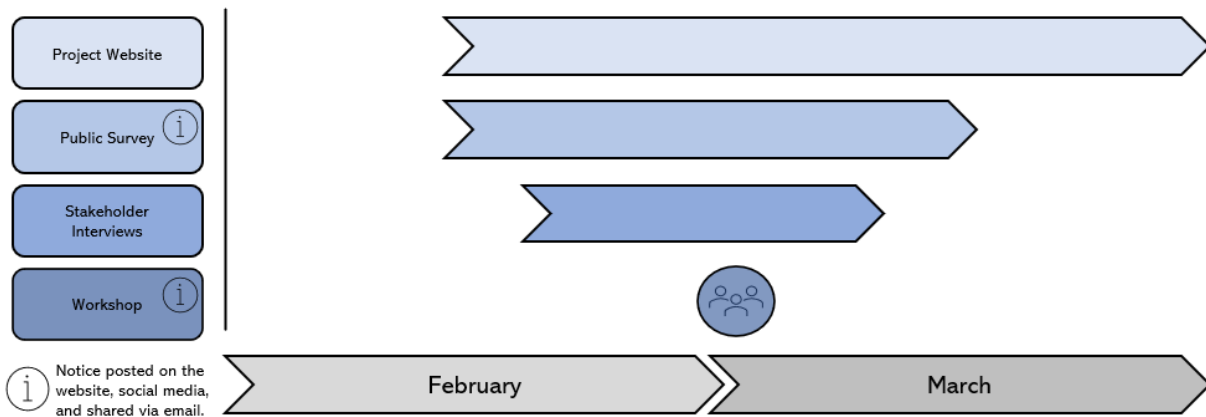


Figure 7. Engagement Steps, Tools, and Timeline.

## ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

In-person stakeholder engagement was limited due to capacity constraints<sup>3</sup>. As a result, the team leads relied on virtual stakeholder engagement. The methods of engagement used to promote participation are outlined below. Communication materials are included in Appendix A.

- **Project poster:** A poster was created to provide a snapshot of the project. Information pertaining to this initiative, including a QR code to the survey, was captured on the poster. This promotional material was shared virtually on all platforms supported by New Tecumseth such as the Town’s website and social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter).
- **Webpage:** A webpage established through New Tecumseth’s website shared relevant information pertaining to the initiative. Information included the project purpose, an overview and the benefits of a local food network, opportunities to participate in the project, and contact information.
- **Social Media Campaign:** The team leads and New Tecumseth leveraged social media to raise awareness of engagement opportunities. Additional promotional material specific to each social media platform

<sup>3</sup> Capacity constraints include project timelines limited by course deadlines, location of project leads, and cost and time associated with travel.

(i.e., Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) was created to accompany each “post” or “story” which included posters, banners, hashtags and modified project descriptions depending on the allotted character limit.

- **Email:** An email address was established as a portal for public communications. Individuals interested in participating in the project were encouraged to email this address. Official communication was facilitated through this channel.

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## IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT

- **Project poster:** The project poster and survey QR code were printed and distributed in the New Tecumseth’s local newspaper. Copies were also available at public places and regional events.
- **Nottawasaga Futures Harvesting Opportunities Event:** Project promotion occurred on Friday, March 3 at the *Nottawasaga Futures Harvesting Opportunities: Exploring the Potential for Agri-Tourism*. Printed posters and QR codes with access to the survey were distributed.

### SURVEY

An online survey was created through Qualtrics, an analytics software accessible through the University of Guelph. The survey comprised of a series of questions to be completed by farmers/producers and the community. The survey was thematically organized below. For a complete list of the survey questions, please see Appendix B.

- 1 question of consent completed by all participants.
- 4 demographic questions completed by all participants.
- 5 general questions completed by all participants.
- 15 questions completed if participants self-identified as “farm equipment/input retailer, food manufacturer/processor, food distributor, retailer, consumer” in Question 11. This represents a subset of the survey designed specifically for the community (“Block 2”).
- 14 questions completed if participants selected “looking to become a producer, new farm entrant, farmer/producer” in Question 11. This represents a subset of the survey designed specifically for farmers/producers (“Block 3”).

Various features in Qualtrics were used to coordinate the survey flow (i.e., skip logic and branches). Response requirements were only applied for the initial question of consent. The survey comprised of various question styles such as text entry, a matrix table and slider, with multiple choice as the most frequent design. All survey respondents were required to complete the questionnaire online, as hard copies were not distributed. As a result, the survey format was designed for desktop, laptop, tablet and mobile viewing.

Question types included nominal, ordinal, interval scale, ratio scale, and open-ended. Depending on the question, multiple answers were encouraged. At the end of Block 2 and Block 3, participants were invited to share their emails for a follow-up discussion on local food systems that would be facilitated at a later date by New Tecumseth. Survey questions were based on preliminary research conducted on local food systems. The questions were designed to yield results that would guide recommendations reflective of both producer and community needs. The *Grey County: A Local Agri-Food Strategy's* sector survey was referenced for guidance and survey design (Grey County, 2017).

The survey was made publicly available for one month from February 17, 2023, to March 17, 2023. The survey was promoted through many channels. The link to the survey was included on the poster via a QR code and printed in the local newspaper. The survey was also available on the New Tecumseth website and posted on the Town's various social media platforms, which included Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. A Facebook grassroots campaign spearheaded by the student leads also facilitated the promotion of the survey. Various Facebook groups that centered upon producer or community pages in the New Tecumseth area were identified. Facebook posts and/or messages were made regularly. Survey uptake was notable after each promotional push.

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## LIMITATIONS

When seeking engagement specifically with farmers/producers, paper surveys are preferred. A hardcopy mailout to producers was explored, however feasibility issues arose (i.e., cost, survey timeline, no address list of producers). The total number of survey participants who self-identified as “looking to become a producer, new farm entrant, farmer/producer”, yielded only 3 survey respondents. Limited survey responses among this group may be a result of the online survey platform.

Since the survey was primarily circulated via virtual platforms, engagement efforts inherently excluded individuals who do not have access to technology, nor use social media platforms. Similarly, the survey link was printed in the local newspaper and circulated during the week of February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Individuals who are not subscribed, nor have access to the local newspaper would not have been made aware of the survey. Distribution results demonstrate that 65 participants accessed the survey through an online anonymous link while two participants used the QR code. This confirms that online engagement facilitated survey participation.

Additionally, survey completion was inconsistent. For example, 67 individuals completed Question 1, however, levels of participation dropped to approximately 56 participants and fewer thereafter. While it is unknown why engagement levels dropped during the survey, individuals may not have anticipated a series of consent and demographic questions at the outset which may have dissuaded individuals if they were unsure of the duration of the survey.

## VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

The virtual workshop was designed to model a focus group discussion with farmers/producers. The workshop was hosted via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, from 12:00pm-1:30pm EST. The workshop was promoted through social media, New Tecumseth’s website, and through direct outreach. Key farmer contacts and individuals who identified interest through the social media campaign were provided with a link to attend the workshop.

The virtual workshop was designed to provide local producers with an opportunity to contribute focused input to the local food network initiative. Although an in-person workshop was initially proposed, the virtual workshop was recommended by key advisors due to its accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and flexibility. For the detailed workshop guide, please see Appendix D.

Table 5 provides an overview of the workshop agenda and timings.

**Table 5. Overview of the Workshop Agenda.**

12:00 – 12:15	15 mins	Welcome and Introductions
12:15 – 12:20	15 mins	Overview of the Local Food Network Project
12:20 – 12:25	5 mins	Workshop Design and SWOT Analysis
12:25 – 12:40	15 mins	Breakout 1: Strengths Assessment
12:40 – 12:55	15 mins	Breakout 2: Weaknesses Assessment
12:55 – 13:10	15 mins	Breakout 3: Opportunities Assessment
13:10 – 13:25	15 mins	Breakout 4: Threats Assessment
13:25 – 13:30	5 mins	Summarize Results and Next Steps

The workshop brought together New Tecumseth planners and an organic farm market owner from north of Alliston, Ontario for a facilitated 90-minute discussion on local food. For complete workshop results, please contact the Town of New Tecumseth.

The workshop was structured around an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), similar to the key informant interviews discussed later in this report.

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## LIMITATIONS

The workshop had several limitations that may have impacted its effectiveness. The workshop was advertised on social media platforms, which may have excluded those without social media or internet access. Interested participants were also required to email the Town for the invite link, which may have deterred some from participating as it added an additional step to participation.

Further, the virtual workshop was held on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, which is typically a busy month for farmers as they attend other agriculture-related workshops and events and begin preparing for the growing season. Additionally, a list of local farmers and producers was not made available, which made identifying local farmers through online platforms such as Facebook community groups challenging.

The virtual workshop had a low turnout rate, with only one organic agri-food business owner in attendance. A low turnout for a virtual SWOT analysis can pose several challenges. For example, a low turnout may indicate a lack of interest or engagement from the community, which may signal limited support for the local food network project. Further, the lack of representation and diversity (i.e., large- and small-scale local producers, livestock farmers, hobby farmers, young farmers etc.) reduces the opportunity for robust engagement. This can compromise the effectiveness of recommendations as solutions may not reflect the needs and interests of the broader community, leading to a less impactful local food network.

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Stakeholders selected to participate in the interviews were referred to as “key informants”. A stakeholder scan was conducted to identify individuals with expertise related to core aspects of the project: producer interests, agricultural land use policy, tourism, culture, local business and economic development, and Indigenous interests.

With input from the project liaison, an initial list of 9 key informants was developed. This list expanded to a final list of individuals who were contacted to provide input to the process. Table 6 summarizes the organizations identified through the stakeholder scan. The complete list of key informants is provided in Appendix C.

**Table 6. List of Stakeholder Organizations Identified for the Key Informant Interviews.**

<b>Stakeholder Organization</b>	<b>Category</b>
<b>Alliston Business Improvement Association</b>	Local Business Interests
<b>Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle</b>	Indigenous Interests
<b>Beeton and Tottenham Business Improvement Association</b>	Local Business Interests
<b>Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario</b>	Producer Interests
<b>National Farmers Union</b>	Producer Interests
<b>Ontario Federation of Agriculture</b>	Producer Interests
<b>Ontario Federation of Agriculture</b>	Agricultural Land Use Policy
<b>Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs</b>	Agricultural Land Use Policy
<b>Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs</b>	Economic Development
<b>Simcoe County</b>	Economic Development
<b>Simcoe County</b>	Tourism
<b>Town of New Tecumseth</b>	Economic Development
<b>Town of New Tecumseth</b>	Culture

Stakeholders were contacted by email outlining the purpose of the project and inviting them to participate in an interview. Of the 14 stakeholders contacted, 8 agreed to conduct an interview or provided contact information for an alternate key informant who was then contacted and interviewed.

The purpose of the interviews was to solicit each key informant’s input on a set of standard questions to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with delivering a local food network in New

Tecumseth. Interviews were 45-minutes and conducted from February 26 through March 7, 2023. The results of the interviews were analyzed and informed the results summarized in Table 7.

In addition to the key informant interviews, four small-scale farms, all producing local food, were contacted directly to solicit input using the SWOT-based questionnaire. The farms selected were all located outside all located outside of New Tecumseth. Selecting farms outside the community was by design to understand what other municipalities were doing to support local farming. Three of these farms were identified by the project liaison as examples of successful farms contributing to the local food system in their communities. The fourth was a local producer outside of New Tecumseth who is a member of Ecological Farmers' Association of Ontario's Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) group and was selected for an interview because they represent equity-deserving groups in farming. Of these four farms, only two responded to undertake an interview and only one farmer was able to conduct an interview during the engagement timelines.

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## **LIMITATIONS**

The main limitation on the informant interviews is the lack of response from five stakeholders. The lack of diversity among interviewees reduces the opportunity for robust key informant engagement. This can compromise the effectiveness of recommendations as solutions may not reflect the needs and interests of the key informants, leading to a less impactful local food network. Given more time, the project leads would have pursued alternate representatives to interview.

## KEY FINDINGS

### SURVEY RESULTS

There was a high response rate to the survey with 67 individuals participating. As elaborated in the Engagement Plan, participation consistency varied. For complete survey results, please contact the Town of New Tecumseth.

Survey data was collected from residents who live within and outside New Tecumseth boundaries. Survey responses were considered viable if the participant answered questions beyond the consent requirement. Out of the 56 viable responses, 8 individuals live outside of New Tecumseth, while the remaining live amongst the three settlement areas. 5 respondents live outside of New Tecumseth in Adjala, Baxter, Everett and Newmarket. 28 respondents live in Alliston, 12 respondents live in Tottenham and 5 respondents live in Beeton. Of the producer responses, 3 respondents live outside of New Tecumseth in Mono and Kitchener while 3 respondents live in Tottenham. Both community and producer respondents selected Parks and Recreation, Rural Setting and Lifestyle, Close-knit Community and Sense of Place among the most valued attributes of New Tecumseth.

### RESULTS FROM THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

#### COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

- 49 individuals self-identified as a consumer, retailer, or food manufacturer/processor.
- 85% self-identified as female.
- 82% are white.
- 37% earn an income of \$100,000 or more.
- 56% live in Alliston.

#### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON A LOCAL FOOD NETWORK

Out of 39 respondents who answered questions beyond the demographics section:

- 36% feel connected to their local food system.
- 82% are somewhat likely or extremely likely to participate in local food initiatives (farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, food trails).
- Over 71% believe New Tecumseth has an important role to play in supporting local food business and should promote buying locally grown food.
- 87% believe New Tecumseth should introduce more initiatives that simplify supporting local food businesses and farmers.
- 82% would purchase more local foods if items were clearly marked as locally grown.
- 79% would order locally produced foods in restaurants if items were clearly marked as locally grown.

- The top three reasons for supporting locally grown foods are supporting local/economic development, freshness and quality of goods, and sustainability/environmental concerns.
- Produce, eggs, and spreads, preserves, and honey are among the most popular local food purchases.
- 30% believe knowing the local food producer is very important.
- 56% indicate that price of item and quality of food influences food purchases.
- The most frequent place to acquire food is a large retailer/grocery chain, while the least frequented is food banks/and other charitable food sources.
- 28% feel that local food is not typically seen at the grocery store.
- 49% cannot recognize locally produced goods.
- 100% would purchase a local food product over a similarly priced imported good. Supporting local was the most common rationale.
- 52% purchase local food 2 times a month or more.
- 47% believe that it is somewhat difficult to purchase local food in New Tecumseth.
- Proposed recommendations by consumers that would strengthen the local food system include extended farmers' markets, local food maps, support for roadside stands, improved labelling of local foods, increased visibility of local foods at retail shops, local food fairs, food hubs, and overall improved support from the municipality.
- 6 respondents shared their email address for further engagement.

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## **RESULTS FROM THE PRODUCER SURVEY**

### **PRODUCER DEMOGRAPHICS**

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- 6 individuals self-identified as a farmer/producer, new farm entrant, or looking to become a producer.
  - All respondents self-identified as female.
  - 50% of those respondents looking to become a producer, a new farm entrant, or farmer/producer are part of equity-deserving groups (Black, Chinese, and South Asian)
  - 50% live outside of New Tecumseth Settlement Areas (Mono and Kitchener).
  - 50% live in Tottenham.
  - 33% are considered youth (34 and younger).
  - 66% earn \$60,000 or less.
-

## PRODUCER PERSPECTIVES ON A LOCAL FOOD NETWORK

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Out of 3 respondents (all located outside of New Tecumseth)<sup>4</sup>:

- 33% feel connected to their local food system.
- 33% would like to become more connected to their local food system.
- 67% operate a small-scale farm (10 acre or less).
- 100% believe the cost of land creates barriers to the viability of farm businesses.
- Cost of land and agricultural capability are the top reasons that informed farming location.
- 100% sell direct to friends/family, through farmgate sales, and at farmers' markets. There are no sales to retailers or restaurants either inside or outside the New Tecumseth boundaries.
- Respondents are currently participating in or will soon be participating in farmers' markets, CSA boxes, a farm store and an online store.
- 67% would be willing to participate in CSA programs and food hubs.
- Farm labour is sourced from family and locally within New Tecumseth.
- Respondents would be interested in selling products to local grocers, artisanal shops, and restaurants within the New Tecumseth boundaries.
- Common barriers to food production include land ownership and access, insufficient infrastructure, and limited ecological stewardship efforts due to land leases, cost of production, access to consumers, regulations, abattoir capacity, unpredictable weather and labour constraints.
- Common barriers in marketing local food include lack of advertising knowledge, inadequate farmer networking, and cost of food to pay for labour and farm inputs while remaining profitable.
- 100% of respondents believe the supports provided by the municipality are not adequate.
- Proposed recommendations by producers for New Tecumseth to adopt include grants, community land trusts, and support for a food hub.
- 2 respondents shared their email address for further engagement.

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<sup>4</sup> The 3 viable respondents are comprised of a farmer/producer in Mono, a new farm entrant in Mono, and an individual looking to become a producer from Kitchener.

## WORKSHOP AND KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW RESULTS

Table 7 summarizes the results of the interviews with key informants.

**Table 7. Key Informant Interviews and Farmer Workshop Results: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><b>Public interest in local food:</b> During the pandemic, there was an increased public interest in local food as residents made new connections to local food businesses and farmers’ markets. People move to the Town for its rural setting and connection to agriculture and local food.</p> <p><i>Quote: “The public is very interested in local food.”</i></p> <p><b>Strong agricultural foundation:</b> Agriculture is a fundamental element of the Town. There is increased diversification with small and medium farms. Farm business exemplars include Murphy’s, Beatty’s, Alliston Creamery, and Sheldon’s Dairy (outside of New Tecumseth).</p> <p><i>Quote: “There is a lot of agriculture in New Tecumseth.”</i></p> <p><b>Successful community initiatives:</b> The Town has successful local food initiatives that the Town can build upon including farmers’ and artisan markets in Alliston, Tottenham and Beeton. In addition, community gardens connect people directly to food.</p>	<p><b>Public awareness of where to find local food:</b> New residents and visitors to New Tecumseth are not aware of local food offerings and events.</p> <p><b>Marketing and agri-tourism support:</b> Farmers do not necessarily have the resources (i.e., time, finances) or tools to market their products and develop agri-tourism businesses. Additionally, there are a lack of supports for producers at the business development stage. Expanding agri-tourism offerings requires programmatic and financial supports for business development, capital investment, and marketing. There is an opportunity to brand and market local food and businesses through signage, labelling, and mapping to help people identify and find local food.</p> <p><i>Quote: “Local government is supportive when people are market ready but not at the development stage.”</i></p> <p><b>Infrastructure assets to support local food:</b> There is a lack of space for year-round farmers’ markets and community gardens. There needs to be Town-level support for community assets and infrastructure to support local food.</p> <p><i>Quote: “We do not have a space for a year-round farmer’s market.”</i></p>

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><b>Policy supports for diversification:</b> Provincial and Town policies support on-farm diversification.</p> <p><i>Quote: “Barriers to on-farm processing lifted when the new Provincial Policy Statement came in.”</i></p> <p><b>Rich agricultural history to showcase:</b> There are rich historical connections to agriculture that are showcased through food festivals, such as the Potato Festival, and through cultural programming offered by the Town and county.</p> <p><i>Quote: “We still have a bee-keeping tie...there is a strong local honey element.”</i></p>	<p><b>Coordination and communications:</b> There are a number of different organizations working to develop local food initiatives but there is minimal knowledge on industry roles and a lack of central coordination, which contributes to duplication and confusion. A centralized approach to coordination and communication at the Town level would be valuable.</p> <p><i>Quote: “Communication is a weakness...we need Town level coordination and support.”</i></p> <p><b>Complexities of the regulatory environment:</b> The regulatory landscape for agri-tourism and food production are complex and hard to navigate, particularly health regulations.</p> <p><i>Quote: “If a farm wanted to expand and have a farm market, the regulations could be cost prohibitive.”</i></p> <p><b>Vision and support for local food:</b> A local food network requires a strong vision and support at all levels within New Tecumseth. While support exists within the planning department, but the local government on a whole need to champion local food for a food network to be successful.</p>

## WORKSHOP AND KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW RESULTS

Opportunities	Threats
<p><b>Agri-tourism potential:</b> With close proximity to urban markets, county-level support for agri-tourism, and supportive Official Plan policies, there is potential to grow agri-tourism in New Tecumseth.</p> <p><i>Quote: “New Tecumseth is an asset hub with key producers in the community.”</i></p> <p><b>Popularity of food programming:</b> Food-based programming is popular with the public. There is an opportunity to expand cultural programming and educational opportunities such as food camps and healthy eating seminars to improve food literacy.</p> <p><b>Successful local food events:</b> There are local food events in the community that can be expanded and promoted, with enhanced connections to event planning at the county level. Ideas include farm-to-table events, “Feast on the Farm”, farm crawls and “gates open” days, a community corn roast, and local food showcased at the mayor’s luncheon.</p> <p><b>Partnerships and coordination:</b> Strong support already exists at the County of Simcoe with a Food Council and Coordinator. There are opportunities to increase coordination and partnerships across political boundaries, and tap into existing Communities of Practice (e.g., Ontario Farmers Association).</p>	<p><b>Lack of land use certainty:</b> Development pressures and land speculation contribute to the high cost of agricultural land, alienation of farmland from prime agricultural areas, and disincentivize investments for farming and agri-tourism.</p> <p><b>Food insecurity:</b> There are many people in the community who are food insecure and would benefit from enhanced access to affordable, healthy local food and community gardens.</p> <p><i>Quote: “Our foodbanks are inundated with people who are food insecure.”</i></p> <p><b>Population growth pressure:</b> Population growth places pressure on agricultural lands which are perceived as “greenfields” and cost effective to develop. New Tecumseth needs to focus density within built boundaries as opposed to prime agricultural areas. Strong policies to force these boundaries, such as the Countryside Line in Waterloo, will help to mitigate speculation.</p> <p><b>Food supply chain influences:</b> Local producers cannot compete with broader food markets and large chain retailers who affect the price and supply of food.</p>

Opportunities	Threats
<p><b>Agri-tourism incentives and financial supports:</b> There are funding programs at the county and provincial level. To strengthen the sector, farmers need better access to these programs. New Tecumseth may consider offering supplemental financing supports at the community level to support agri-tourism development, marketing, and events if financial resources allow.</p> <p><b>Young farmers seeking access:</b> Young farmers are innovative and are the future of farming in New Tecumseth. Although the next generation of farmers have creative ideas and are interested in local food, they experience barriers in accessing affordable farmland. The Town can investigate alternate mechanisms to provide more affordable access to farmland.</p> <p><i>Quote: "Need to find ways to promote getting young folks into farming."</i></p>	<p><b>Labour challenges:</b> Challenges exist in finding and hiring local labour to support small-scale farms. With slim profit margins, farmers are unable to increase their wages to attract more workers.</p>

## LOCAL FOOD NETWORK FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN

The results of the stakeholder engagement and policy analysis identified key issues related to a local food network in New Tecumseth. These issues are grouped into the following themes for the framework:

1. Governance, Communications and Coordination
2. Land Use Policy and By-laws
3. Marketing, Promotion, and Agri-tourism
4. Local Food Infrastructure and Facilities
5. Financial Supports and Sustainable Farming Practices
6. Food Access and Equity
7. Agricultural History and Food Cultural Connections
8. Agricultural Data

Each of these themes has been summarized below with recommendations for policies and supporting actions to establish a local food network in New Tecumseth. Examples of best practices accompany each policy recommendation.

This Local Food Network Framework and Action Plan emphasizes actions that are within the scope of New Tecumseth to deliver. Some recommended policies may be outside the sphere of control for the Town but are of significant importance that warranted inclusion in the Action Plan.

**THEME 1: GOVERNANCE, COMMUNICATIONS, AND COORDINATION**

**Issue Statement:** Organizations involved in the local food system lack coordination and communication.

**Explanation:** A local food network is only as successful as the relationships and connections created to support it. The stakeholder engagement revealed the need for improved communications and coordination by the municipality on local food. Municipal leadership must be enhanced, ideally with a dedicated resource person, to support the development of a local food network. Furthermore, a local food vision must receive buy-in from all levels within the municipal government. This can be achieved through strong voices and municipal champions, backed by policy.

Policy	Action	Best Practice
Improve communications and coordination related to local food.	Identify a <b>municipal-level lead for local food</b> .	Simcoe County Food Coordinator <a href="https://www.simcoe.ca/foodcouncil">https://www.simcoe.ca/foodcouncil</a>
Facilitate connections between local producers and retailers.	Create an <b>online directory</b> to support local food.	Simcoe County Ag Grid 2023 <a href="https://edo.simcoe.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/AgGrid-2023.pdf">https://edo.simcoe.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/AgGrid-2023.pdf</a>  Kawartha Choice Farm Fresh <a href="https://kawarthachoice.com/">https://kawarthachoice.com/</a>

## THEME 2: LAND USE POLICY AND BY-LAWS

**Issue Statement:** Current agricultural land-use policies do not effectively protect and promote agriculture in New Tecumseth and may contribute to land speculation.

**Explanation:** New Tecumseth is seeking land-use based approaches to supporting local food. The policy analysis and stakeholder engagement show that there are some critical policy gaps that need to be addressed to improve the foundation for a thriving local agri-food sector.

One of the key issues identified was development speculation on prime agricultural land. This speculation drives up farmland prices and alienates farmland from food production. Stakeholders expressed concerns that a local food network may not be feasible in New Tecumseth unless farmland and agricultural uses are actively protected and promoted. Lands owned by developers are often leased back for agricultural use but are predominantly used for cash crops, as illustrated by the census results. Farmers are less likely to invest capital inputs and soil improvements on lands where they do not hold long-term tenure.

Policy	Action	Best Practice
Commit to local food through a statement in New Tecumseth's Official Plan.	Update the Official Plan to define a clear <b>goal statement related to local food</b> and ensure that local food is championed at all levels in the municipality.	County of Haliburton Official Plan Section 7.10  <a href="https://www.haliburtoncounty.ca/en/planning-and-maps/resources/Documents/County-of-Haliburton-Official-Plan-2017.pdf">https://www.haliburtoncounty.ca/en/planning-and-maps/resources/Documents/County-of-Haliburton-Official-Plan-2017.pdf</a>
Strengthen Official Plan policies relating to the protection of prime agricultural land.	Prioritize Official Plan policies to focus urban growth and development in settlement areas and <b>restrict expansion on prime agricultural land</b> .	Region of Waterloo's Countryside Line  <a href="https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/regional-government/land-use-planning.aspx#Regional-Official-Plan">https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/regional-government/land-use-planning.aspx#Regional-Official-Plan</a>

Policy	Action	Best Practice
<p>Enable policies and by-laws that support on-farm diversified uses.</p>	<p>Develop enabling by-laws <b>to support small-scale food-related infrastructure and other diversified uses</b> such as farm stores, seasonal recreational activities, and agri-tourism.</p>	<p>Springwater Official Plan Policy 17.3 Permitted Uses</p> <p><a href="https://www.springwater.ca/en/business-and-development/resources/Documents/OfficialPlan/Section-17---Agricultural-Policies-2018-Accessible.pdf">https://www.springwater.ca/en/business-and-development/resources/Documents/OfficialPlan/Section-17---Agricultural-Policies-2018-Accessible.pdf</a></p> <p>County of Brant</p> <p><a href="https://www.brant.ca/en/planning-and-development/resources/Documents/Planning-Agriculture-Related-Use-OFDU.pdf">https://www.brant.ca/en/planning-and-development/resources/Documents/Planning-Agriculture-Related-Use-OFDU.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://engagebrant.ca/thenewofficialplan">https://engagebrant.ca/thenewofficialplan</a></p>
<p>Support agricultural and local food uses in all land use designations.</p>	<p>Advance by-laws that <b>support agricultural activities and land uses</b> in residential, commercial and institutional land use designations to support local food uses such as farmers' markets, community gardens and backyard chickens.</p>	<p>City of Hamilton By-law No. 14-273 Community Gardens and Urban Farms</p> <p><a href="http://www2.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/17078CD2-9D15-420E-9C30-19BC69FA17E1/0/14273NotFinal.pdf">http://www2.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/17078CD2-9D15-420E-9C30-19BC69FA17E1/0/14273NotFinal.pdf</a></p> <p>City of Toronto - Backyard Chickens</p> <p><a href="https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/animals-pets/pets-in-the-city/backyard-hens/">https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/animals-pets/pets-in-the-city/backyard-hens/</a></p>

Policy	Action	Best Practice
Designate land use for local food services in the Official Plan.	Enhance Official Plan policies and supporting by-laws to <b>enable the development of community gardens, farmers' markets</b> , and small-scale processing facilities (e.g., co-operatives and community kitchens) in settlement areas.	City of Waterloo Official Plan  <a href="https://www.waterloo.ca/en/government/resources/Documents/Cityadministration/Official-plan/2022/COW_OP_Consolidation_Nov2022.pdf">https://www.waterloo.ca/en/government/resources/Documents/Cityadministration/Official-plan/2022/COW_OP_Consolidation_Nov2022.pdf</a>
Establish Official Plan policies to encourage agricultural uses on small lots.	Develop a policy to <b>encourage farming on existing small lots</b> .	Peterborough County Official Plan – Policy 6.2.1.4 (f)  <a href="https://www.ptbocounty.ca/en/resourcesGeneral/Documents/planning-County-OP.pdf">https://www.ptbocounty.ca/en/resourcesGeneral/Documents/planning-County-OP.pdf</a>
Advance active transportation options that increase connections and access to local food.	Develop a policy to <b>support active transportation</b> and transit access to local food.	Region of Waterloo -Transit Hubs  <a href="https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/Modules/News/index.aspx?newsId=47ad33b5-c384-4c2d-b4ef-bc199f29c0a4">https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/Modules/News/index.aspx?newsId=47ad33b5-c384-4c2d-b4ef-bc199f29c0a4</a>

### THEME 3: MARKETING, PROMOTION, AND AGRITOURISM

**Issue:** Farmers lack the resources and time to market their products and develop agri-tourism opportunities.

**Explanation:** Research and stakeholder engagement revealed that producers often lack the capacity and knowledge on marketing products and developing new agri-tourism businesses. Survey data shows that lack of advertising knowledge is a barrier in marketing local food with 82% of respondents stating they would purchase more local foods if items were clearly marked as locally grown.

Furthermore, the public is not often aware of where and how to access local food, with only 36% of survey respondents feeling connected to their local food system. Despite this, there is an appetite in the community for more access to local food with 82% of survey respondents indicating they are “somewhat likely” or “extremely likely” to participate in local food. This highlights the potential that exists for local food in New Tecumseth.

Policy	Action	Best Practice
Provide resources for farmers to support the marketing and promotion of local food.	Leverage an existing <b>local food toolkit</b> that includes strategies for marketing.	<p>Simcoe County Agritourism Toolkit  <a href="https://edo.simcoe.ca/agri-tourism-toolkit/">https://edo.simcoe.ca/agri-tourism-toolkit/</a></p> <p>Ontario Farmers Association Always in Season Toolkit  <a href="https://ofa.on.ca/alwaysinseason/toolkit/?pdf=ofa-always-in-season-toolkit-eng#toolkit/">https://ofa.on.ca/alwaysinseason/toolkit/?pdf=ofa-always-in-season-toolkit-eng#toolkit/</a></p>
Create local branding and marketing campaigns to promote local food.	Establish a New Tecumseth <b>local food brand</b> and deliver a <b>local food promotional campaign</b> through signage and events.	<p>Bruce Peninsula Where to Eat  <a href="https://visitbrucepeninsula.ca/where-to-eat/">https://visitbrucepeninsula.ca/where-to-eat/</a></p> <p>Farmland Ontario – Farmers Stories</p>

Policy	Action	Best Practice
		<a href="https://www.ontario.ca/foodland/page/farmers-stories">https://www.ontario.ca/foodland/page/farmers-stories</a>
<p>Coordinate with Simcoe County to deliver regional agri-tourism strategies.</p>	<p>Build on agri-tourism initiatives at the county level to <b>celebrate local food</b> in New Tecumseth.</p>	<p>Simcoe County Honey Trail</p> <p><a href="https://experience.simcoe.ca/thehoneytrail">https://experience.simcoe.ca/thehoneytrail</a></p> <p>Simcoe County Feast on the Farm</p> <p><a href="https://ontarioculinary.com/destinations/simcoe-county/">https://ontarioculinary.com/destinations/simcoe-county/</a></p>



#### THEME 4: LOCAL FOOD INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

**Issue:** Current infrastructure limits production capacities within the agri-food sector.

**Explanation:** New Tecumseth lacks some key infrastructure and food facilities to support production of, and access to, local food on a consistent basis. Stakeholders demonstrated an interest in community spaces to service year-round local food initiatives.

Many key informants agree that an undersupply of processing facilities hinder local food production, particularly abattoirs and grain processing facilities. Infrastructural barriers to production such as these limit farm business capacities and opportunities to scale.

Policy	Action	Best Practice
Create community spaces to support local food.	Develop a <b>multi-purpose community space</b> that supports year-round use and access to local food.	Niagara Falls Cultural Hub and Farmers' Market  <a href="https://niagarafalls.civicweb.net/document/39884/">https://niagarafalls.civicweb.net/document/39884/</a>
Establish policies to address food processing gaps.	Develop bylaws to enable <b>innovative approaches to establishing processing facilities</b> for livestock (e.g., mobile abattoir) and grains.	Huron County Agricultural-Commercial Industrial (AG3) Zoning  <a href="https://www.huroncounty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Huron-County-Innovative-Agricultural-Products-Abattoir-Business-Case-Final-FINAL-ua.pdf">https://www.huroncounty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Huron-County-Innovative-Agricultural-Products-Abattoir-Business-Case-Final-FINAL-ua.pdf</a>

Policy	Action	Best Practice
		Clare Martin's Mobile On-Farm Processing Facility located in Cobden, Ontario  <a href="https://farmersforum.com/time-for-on-farm-slaughter-off-farm-meat-sales/">https://farmersforum.com/time-for-on-farm-slaughter-off-farm-meat-sales/</a>



## THEME 5: FINANCIAL SUPPORTS AND SUSTAINABLE FARMING PRACTICES

**Issue Statement:** High operational costs and lack of awareness and access to financial resources serve as barriers to entry which deter new farmers and threatens the viability of local farms in New Tecumseth.

**Explanation:** While grant programs are available to farmers, some may be unaware of these opportunities or may not know how to access them. Feedback through the workshop revealed that few incentives exist to encourage sustainable farming, which threatens the viability of many small-scale farms. Key informants and the workshop participant recognize that young farmers present an important opportunity to sustainable, local farming, as they often have innovative approaches to farming and see value in local food. However, barriers to entry exist such as cost of land and farming inputs. Resources and programs tailored to young and new farmers can be leveraged by the Town to support the new generation of farmers.

Policy Recommendations	Action	Best Practice
Strengthen access to funding supports for local food initiatives.	Develop a streamlined process for <b>access to funding and grants</b> to support local food initiatives.	Guelph-Wellington’s Food Access and Circularity Spark Grants  <a href="https://foodfuture.ca/SparkGrants/about">https://foodfuture.ca/SparkGrants/about</a>  Northern Farm Start-up Grant Program  <a href="https://efao.ca/northern-farm-start-up-grants/">https://efao.ca/northern-farm-start-up-grants/</a>
Advocate for a provincial grant program to build capacity for small scale producers.	Pursue a <b>financial acceleration program</b> to provide financial support to small-scale and market garden producers (i.e., under 10 acres).	British Columbia’s Small Farm Business Acceleration Pilot Program  <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/small-business-acceleration-pilot-program">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/small-business-acceleration-pilot-program</a>

Policy Recommendations	Action	Best Practice
		<p>Nova Scotia’s Small Farm Acceleration Program</p> <p><a href="https://novascotia.ca/programs/small-farm-acceleration/Small_Farm_Acceleration_Guidelines.pdf">https://novascotia.ca/programs/small-farm-acceleration/Small_Farm_Acceleration_Guidelines.pdf</a></p>
<p>Promote “buy-local” in municipal procurement policies.</p>	<p>Establish municipal policies and by-laws to <b>support procurement of local food and agricultural products</b>.</p>	<p>Sustain Ontario’s Local Sustainable Food Procurement for Municipalities and the Broader Public Sector Toolkit</p> <p><a href="https://sustainontario.com/greenhouse/custom/uploads/2016/09/Toolkit_Final25-11.pdf">https://sustainontario.com/greenhouse/custom/uploads/2016/09/Toolkit_Final25-11.pdf</a></p> <p>City of Thunder Bay’s By-Law 113-2011 (specifically section 2.03 Sustainable Environmental and Ethical Procurement)</p> <p><a href="https://www.thunderbay.ca/en/business/resources/Documents/Supply-By-law-113-2011.pdf">https://www.thunderbay.ca/en/business/resources/Documents/Supply-By-law-113-2011.pdf</a></p>
<p>Promote the harmonization of farming in natural environments.</p>	<p>Collaborate with environmental organizations and multi-organization partnerships to <b>extend supports to farmers</b> to help manage their land (e.g., livestock fencing, stream restoration, erosion control, tree planting).</p>	<p>Essex’s Region Conservation: Agricultural Stewardship.</p> <p><a href="https://essexregionconservation.ca/stewardships-grants/agricultural-stewardship/">https://essexregionconservation.ca/stewardships-grants/agricultural-stewardship/</a></p>

Policy Recommendations	Action	Best Practice
		<p>Canadian-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan</p> <p><a href="https://www.ontario.ca/page/canada-ontario-environmental-farm-plan-efp">https://www.ontario.ca/page/canada-ontario-environmental-farm-plan-efp</a></p> <p>Region of Peel’s ALUS Peel Pilot. Soil and Water Improvement Projects.</p> <p><a href="https://alus.ca/alus_community/alus-peel-pilot/">https://alus.ca/alus_community/alus-peel-pilot/</a></p>
<p>Advocate and promote for fair and transparent compensation practices across all agricultural industries.</p>	<p>The Town of New Tecumseth can become a <b>living wage employer</b> and champion a living wage through the <b>Living Wage Network</b> and consider wage subsidies to minimize labour shortages.</p>	<p>Ontario Living Wage Network</p> <p><a href="https://www.ontariolivingwage.ca/">https://www.ontariolivingwage.ca/</a></p>
<p>Enhance the local job market to meet projected growth targets in the local agricultural sector.</p>	<p>Prioritize a <b>local agricultural labor force</b> and identify training needs and requirements.</p>	<p>Kingston and Area Farmer Training Program</p> <p><a href="https://www.loving Spoonful.org/farmer-training-program">https://www.loving Spoonful.org/farmer-training-program</a></p>
<p>Promote alternative farming practices.</p>	<p>Collaborate with agricultural organizations and academic institutions to <b>incentivize the adoption of alternative farming practices</b> (e.g., organic).</p>	<p>The Organic Council of Ontario - Farmer Training and Transition Support</p> <p><a href="https://organiccouncil.ca/farmer-training/">https://organiccouncil.ca/farmer-training/</a></p>

Policy Recommendations	Action	Best Practice
<p>Provide enhanced supports and land access for young and new farmers, particularly young farmers and equity deserving groups.</p>	<p>Through a local food toolkit, <b>connect new farmers to mentorship and training programs and land matching.</b></p>	<p>Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario New Farmer Programs <a href="https://efao.ca/new-farmer-programs/">https://efao.ca/new-farmer-programs/</a></p> <p>Young Agrarians Land Matching Program <a href="https://youngagrarians.org/tools/land/bc-land-matching-program/">https://youngagrarians.org/tools/land/bc-land-matching-program/</a></p>
	<p>Establish a comprehensive program to <b>promote community land trusts and cooperatives</b> as viable options for farmland access.</p>	<p>Community Farms Program – Farmland Trusts <a href="https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/A_review_of_farmland_trusts.pdf">https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/A_review_of_farmland_trusts.pdf</a></p> <p>Young Agrarians Land Access Tools <a href="https://youngagrarians.org/tools/land/">https://youngagrarians.org/tools/land/</a></p>

**THEME 6: FOOD ACCESS AND EQUITY**

**Issue:** Residents lack consistent and equitable access to local food and local food initiatives.

**Explanation:** Stakeholder interviews and survey results flagged the importance of food access and security. One key informant stated that the food banks “are inundated with people who are food insecure” and questioned how to connect the abundant local food with those experiencing food insecurity.

Additionally, recruitment and retention of farm labour is a challenge for local producers. This issue, combined with the under-representation of youth in farming, presents an opportunity to develop programs to support youth employment on local farms.

Policy Recommendation	Action	Best Practice
Improve access to local food through diverse food outlets that support low-income residents.	Explore partnerships to <b>offer food vouchers</b> for participating local food initiatives (e.g., farmers’ markets).	British Columbia’s Farmers’ Market Nutrition Coupon Program  <a href="https://bcfarmersmarket.org/coupon-program/how-it-works/">https://bcfarmersmarket.org/coupon-program/how-it-works/</a>
	Facilitate partnerships between producers and/or wholesalers and the food bank to <b>enhance access to local food.</b>	Ottawa Food Bank’s Community Harvest  <a href="https://www.ottawafoodbank.ca/community-harvest/?gclid=EAlalQobChMlh6rHk9bq_QIVMBTUAR24-w44EAAYASAAEgJ2LvD_BwE">https://www.ottawafoodbank.ca/community-harvest/?gclid=EAlalQobChMlh6rHk9bq_QIVMBTUAR24-w44EAAYASAAEgJ2LvD_BwE</a>
	<b>Improve the logistical capacities</b> of food bank donations from local producers.	Second Harvest  <a href="https://secondharvest.ca/about-us/our-story">https://secondharvest.ca/about-us/our-story</a>

Policy Recommendation	Action	Best Practice
Assess local food security.	Conduct a <b>Community Food Assessment</b> to assess the options, services, spaces, and programs that affect community food security.	Just Food’s Community Food Assessment Toolkit  <a href="https://justfood.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Wheres_the_Food_web_2.0.pdf">https://justfood.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Wheres_the_Food_web_2.0.pdf</a>
Develop programs that support diverse farm labor and encourage new farm entrants.	Adopt a <b>summer agricultural youth employment</b> program.	Ontario Public Service Summer Employment Opportunities  <a href="https://www.ontario.ca/page/careers-summer-employment-opportunities">https://www.ontario.ca/page/careers-summer-employment-opportunities</a>  Canada Summer Jobs Program  <a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding/youth-employment-skills-strategy-program.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding/youth-employment-skills-strategy-program.html</a>



## THEME 7: AGRICULTURAL HISTORY AND FOOD CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

**Issue:** Residents feel disconnected from New Tecumseth’s agricultural sector which prevents participation in the local food system.

**Explanation:** New Tecumseth has a rich agricultural history, which is core to what attracts people to the community. Survey results revealed that “rural setting and lifestyle” and “sense of place” are attributes respondents value most about New Tecumseth. It is important that the Local Food Network Framework and Action Plan recognizes this cultural connection to agriculture. This is already demonstrated as New Tecumseth actively celebrates their agricultural history with the Beeton Honey and Garden Festival in May and the Alliston Potato Festival in August.

According to one key informant, food-based programming is very popular with the public in New Tecumseth. There are opportunities to foster the local community’s connection to local food through cultural programming and public educational opportunities such as food camps and healthy eating seminars.

Policy Recommendation	Action	Best Practice
Support events that celebrate New Tecumseth’s local food history.	Continue to <b>support and promote community food events</b> such as the Honey and Garden Festival and Potato Fest to celebrate the agricultural roots of New Tecumseth.	Beeton Honey and Garden Festival <a href="https://www.thehoneyfestival.com/">https://www.thehoneyfestival.com/</a>  Beeton Fall Fair, Beeton and District Agricultural Society <a href="https://www.beetonfair.com/">https://www.beetonfair.com/</a>  Alliston Potato Festival <a href="https://allistonpotatofest.com/">https://allistonpotatofest.com/</a>

Policy Recommendation	Action	Best Practice
Improve general knowledge on the New Tecumseth's agricultural history.	Establish a user-friendly, explanatory guide on the New Tecumseth's agricultural history.	<p>A Short History of Food and Foodways in Nova Scotia</p> <p><a href="https://archives.novascotia.ca/cooking/history/">https://archives.novascotia.ca/cooking/history/</a></p>
Locate producers that contribute to the longevity of New Tecumseth's food legacy	<b>Create a food map</b> that identifies farmers and producers.	<p>Guelph-Wellington Local Food Map</p> <p><a href="https://www.wellington.ca/en/business/resources/TasteReal2017/Attachements/TR-Local-Food-Map-2021-Accessible.pdf">https://www.wellington.ca/en/business/resources/TasteReal2017/Attachements/TR-Local-Food-Map-2021-Accessible.pdf</a></p> <p>Ontario Farmers Association - West Nipissing Sudbury East's Local Food Map</p> <p><a href="https://www.wnsefa.com/local-food-map">https://www.wnsefa.com/local-food-map</a></p>
Prioritize community food literacy.	Build a food charter and support the delivery of the charter through <b>educational programs and workshops</b> to promote local food connections and literacy.	<p>Kawartha Lakes Food Charter</p> <p><a href="https://www.kawarthalakes.ca/en/resourcesGeneral/Documents/Reports-and-Studies/Kawartha-Lakes-Food-Charter.pdf">https://www.kawarthalakes.ca/en/resourcesGeneral/Documents/Reports-and-Studies/Kawartha-Lakes-Food-Charter.pdf</a></p> <p>Cheyenne Sundance Farm School</p> <p><a href="https://www.sundanceharvestmarket.com/farm-school">https://www.sundanceharvestmarket.com/farm-school</a></p>

## THEME 8: AGRICULTURAL DATA

**Issue Statement:** Local data on agri-food businesses, their locations, and trends in agricultural land use over time are limited.

**Explanation:** While agricultural data is available at the provincial and regional level, data specific to New Tecumseth is scarce. Local data is vital for the success of a local food network as it provides insight into the current state and trends of the agricultural industry, while also identifying the needs of local farmers, businesses, and consumers. Additionally, policy decisions that are informed by local data are more likely to be effective and successful in achieving their intended outcomes.

Policy Recommendations	Action	Best Practice
Develop agricultural data sets and track performance indicators related to local food.	<b>Collect data of existing farms and agri-food businesses.</b>  Establish effective baseline measures, from which performance indicators can be measured to support a local food network.	Best Practices in Local Food, A Guide for Municipalities: Implementing strategies and measuring outcomes.  <a href="https://www.roma.on.ca/sites/default/files/DOCUMENTS/Reports/2013/BestPracticesinLocalFoodAGuideforMunicipalities20130809.pdf">https://www.roma.on.ca/sites/default/files/DOCUMENTS/Reports/2013/BestPracticesinLocalFoodAGuideforMunicipalities20130809.pdf</a>

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The data suggests that there are recommendations that may be adopted in the short-term to help implement a local food network. Based on the recommendations outlined in the Local Food Network Framework and Action Plan, the 5 actions below may have the most immediate impact on building the foundation for a local food network.

### **1. *Identify a municipal-level lead for local food.***

Since a local food network requires continuous management, a project lead would be valuable in overseeing the logistics of localizing a food system. They would serve as a point person and liaise between lower and upper-tier municipalities and other relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations to ensure that policies are up-to-date and consistent with other local food initiatives. It would also be their responsibility to stay informed on opportunities that would strengthen the Town's local food network (e.g., grants and programming for farmers).

### **2. *Create an online directory to support local food.***

To simplify the facilitation of partnerships among producers, retailers, and consumers, an online directory may be used as an "all-in-one" resource outlet. Information to support producers and retailers offers immediate support in aiding queries. This reduces capacity constraints if the inquirer can bypass communicating with the Town and contact the desired source directly. A useful directory may contain information on funding and finance, real estate and support, research and development, finance management, legal services, networking, training and events, business planning, marketing and sales, distribution, and health and safety. An online directory may also be created to identify agri-food experiences, farmers' markets, farms, food services, restaurants, and retailers in New Tecumseth. This type of directory serves to strengthen relationships among all participants in the local food system by clearly indicating where and how to engage with various producers and retailers.

### **3. *Develop enabling by-laws to support small-scale food-related infrastructure and other diversified uses such as farm stores, seasonal recreational activities, and agri-tourism.***

New initiatives that facilitate the implementation of a local food network should be rooted in the Town's By-laws. On-Farm Diversified Uses (OFDU) are permitted by the Province of Ontario. Specific guidelines have been published by the province to simplify the adoption of such uses within municipalities' official policies and regulations. Entrenching OFDU within New Tecumseth's Zoning By-laws will ensure consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and encourage farmers/producers to develop various on-farm uses that enhance the local food system and stimulate the local economy.

### **4. *Develop a local food toolkit that includes strategies for marketing.***

Many farmers/producers and retailers are interested in connecting with their customers but are unaware of how to effectively promote their business. A toolkit may offer suggestions to bolster marketing strategies, enhance meaningful advertisements and leverage the agri-food business. Tailored examples may include social media promotion, business-to-business networking, and connecting with consumers. Impactful

marketing strategies can lead to improved relationships between stakeholders along the agri-food value supply chain, strengthened partnerships, and peaked engagement from the community.

**5. *Create a food map that identifies farmers, producers, and local artisans.***

In order to engage in a local food network, the community must be aware of the opportunities that exist. A local food map clearly indicates, by geographic location, various local food options in New Tecumseth. While this opportunity serves an immediate benefit for the community, the information is useful tool that entices agri-food and culinary tourism. Examples of mappable locations include farms, retailers, culinary classes, farmers’ markets, beverages, caterers, restaurants, and artisanal and local shops.

## CONCLUSION

The initiative to create a Local Food Network Framework and Action Plan demonstrates New Tecumseth’s interest in developing a viable local food system. The recommendations presented in this report reflect the data collected from diverse stakeholder engagement. Successful local food networks typically comprise of multi-phase processes and continuous stakeholder engagement, with the anticipation of delivering a system that adequately satisfies the needs of producers, consumers, and the Town. This report is offered as foundational work, as data now exists for the Town to move forward. Each engagement tool was strategically designed as a building block for the Town to advance. It is recommended that the Town refer to the information shared in this report, the appendices, and raw data results to further develop a local food network. With adequate time, resources, and coordination, the Town will be able to realize their vision of a local food network.



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## APPENDIX A – COMMUNICATIONS MATERIAL

### Online and Printed Poster:



**Local Food Network**

**HELP US FIND SOLUTIONS TO YOUR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM**

New Tecumseth has partnered with the University of Guelph to establish a Local Food Network.

**WHY A LOCAL FOOD NETWORK?**

- Foster community engagement
- Improve food security
- Strengthen local economic development
- Support the community's climate action goals

**FILL OUT OUR SURVEY!**



Email us at [ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca](mailto:ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca)

 SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

 Alliston · Beeton · Tottenham

The poster features a circular inset image of a farmer's market stall with various fresh produce like lemons, radishes, and bell peppers. The background is a light green and yellow gradient.

### Twitter:

Food for thought! Help shape your local food network and make a difference in your community. Take our survey to participate. #MakeItNewTec #CommunityEngagement #SupportLocal



**Help Shape Your Local Food Network!**

For more information visit:



The graphic features a dark blue background with a collection of colorful, stylized illustrations of fresh produce including an orange, a red apple, a purple radish, a yellow lemon, a banana, a pink raspberry, a pear, a pomegranate, and a carrot.

**Instagram:**

We are working with the University of Guelph to conduct a short survey to help us guide and establish a Local Food Network. Complete the survey by March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Take the survey and find out more at [Town's website](#).



**Instagram Story:**

Take the survey

Complete the survey by March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023



## Facebook:

### **Post 1:**

Hello,

The Town of New Tecumseth is looking to enhance the local agricultural sector by supporting sustainable farming and agri-food businesses. The Town is collaborating with the University of Guelph to find solutions that promote a Local Food Network. Local food systems are designed specifically to meet the needs of the community. That's why we want to hear from you! We welcome all residents and stakeholders to participate in the development of a Local Food Network. There are several ways you can get involved:

1. Complete our survey by March 10<sup>th</sup>:  
[https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_e3OCIQEKZA0oBvw](https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e3OCIQEKZA0oBvw)
2. If you are a farmer/producer, consider attending our virtual workshop on Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, from 12:00-1:30pm. Please email [ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca](mailto:ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca) to get the link.
3. Check out the [Town's website](#) and our social media for more information
4. You may also email [ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca](mailto:ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca) with any questions or ideas you have on our project.

We are trying to ensure as much community exposure as possible. We would appreciate if this information could be shared with your networks, circulated on any social media platforms such as Facebook, or promoted at any upcoming event.

If you have any questions related to our initiative, please respond to this message or email [ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca](mailto:ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca).

### **Post 2:**

Just a friendly reminder the Town of New Tecumseth is collaborating with the University of Guelph to find solutions that promote a Local Food Network, and we want to hear from you!

There are several ways you can get involved:

- Complete our survey by March 10<sup>th</sup>:  
[https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_e3OCIQEKZA0oBvw](https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e3OCIQEKZA0oBvw)
- If you are a farmer/producer, consider attending our virtual workshop on Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, from 12:00-1:30pm. Please email [ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca](mailto:ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca) to get the link.
- You may also email [ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca](mailto:ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca) with any questions or ideas you have on our project.

### **Post 3:**

We want to hear your thoughts on a Local Food Network in New Tecumseth. The survey takes approximately 5-8 minutes to complete. The deadline has been extended to Friday, March 17<sup>th</sup>!

[https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_e3OCIQEKZA0oBvw](https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e3OCIQEKZA0oBvw)

If you have any questions or recommendations, please email [ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca](mailto:ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca)

## APPENDIX B – SURVEY GUIDE

You are invited to participate in a survey to help guide the development of a Local Food Network for the Town of New Tecumseth.

The following survey is being conducted in partnership between the University of Guelph, School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, and the Town of New Tecumseth. Participation in this survey is voluntary. You can withdraw at any point during this survey.

The survey should take **10 minutes** to complete. The information you provide will be kept confidential and anonymous, but as it is online, complete anonymity is not guaranteed. The data collected will only be accessible to authorized researchers and used for data analysis.

Please note that this survey is best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.

By completing this survey, you consent to participate. Should you wish to withdraw consent at any time, simply exit before the end of the survey.

If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please contact [ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca](mailto:ruralfoodnetwork@newtecumseth.ca).

- I consent
- I do not consent

### GENERAL

1. What is your age?
  - Under 12 years old
  - 12-17 years old
  - 18-24 years old
  - 25-34 years old
  - 45-54 years old
  - 55-64 years old
  - 65-74 years old
  - 75 years or older
  
2. What is your gender?
  - Female
  - Male
  - Non-binary
  - Other

3. What is your race?

- Arab
- Black
- White
- Indigenous
- Filipino
- Korean
- Chinese
- Japanese
- Latin American
- West Asian (for example, Iranian, Afghan)
- South Asian (for example, East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
- Southeast Asian (or example, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai)
- Other: (please list)

4. What is your income?

- \$0-\$19,999
- \$20,000-\$39,999
- \$40,000-\$59,999
- \$60,000-\$79,999
- \$80,000-99,999
- \$100,000 or more

5. What is your postal code? (optional)

6. What Town do you reside in?

- New Tecumseth - Alliston
- New Tecumseth - Tottenham
- New Tecumseth - Beeton
- I live outside of New Tecumseth (please indicate where)

7. What are three things you value about New Tecumseth?

- Parks and recreation
- Strong sense of place
- Diversity and inclusion
- Family history and ties to the municipality
- Job opportunities
- Affordable living
- Rural setting and lifestyle
- Close-knit community
- Cultural heritage
- Other: (please list)

8. What is your primary role within New Tecumseth's local food system?

- Farm equipment/input retailer
- Looking to become a producer
- New farm entrant
- Farmer/Producer
- Food processor
- Food Distributor
- Retailer
- Consumer

9. How connected do you feel to your local food system?

- Very connected
- Connected
- Somewhat connected
- Not connected
- Would like to become more connected

**PUBLIC (Non-Farmers/Non-Producers)**

1. How likely are you to participate in initiatives (e.g., farmers' markets, food (CSA) boxes, food "trails") that support local food systems?

- Extremely likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat Unlikely
- Extremely unlikely

2. Please rank the following questions from 1-5 (1= strongly agree, 3= impartial, 5= strongly disagree)

- The Town of New Tecumseth has an important role to play in supporting local food businesses
- The Town of New Tecumseth should promote buying locally grown food
- The Town of New Tecumseth should introduce more initiatives that make it easy to support local food businesses and farmers
- I find it difficult to know whether food is locally sourced or not
- I would buy more locally produced foods if they were clearly marked as locally grown
- I would order more locally produced foods in restaurants if the menu items were clearly marked as locally grown
- I am willing to pay more for food that is locally produced

3. What are your top three reasons for participating in or supporting local food systems?

- I make a living in the local food sector

- Food security
  - Sustainability/environmental concerns
  - Reduced food miles
  - Health/nutrition
  - Support local growers/economy
  - Freshness and quality
  - Relationships with farmers/producers
  - Farm to plate traceability
  - I know where my food is coming from
  - Other: (please list)
4. On a scale of 1-5, do sustainable production practices influence your food purchases?  
(1 = strongly influence, 3 = neutral, 5 = does not influence at all)
5. What locally produced food items do you purchase? (Select all that apply)
- Produce (vegetables, fruits)
  - Meat & Poultry
  - Eggs
  - Milk/dairy
  - Baked goods
  - Spreads, preserves, honey
  - Alcoholic beverages
  - Other: (please list)
6. How important is it that you know the farmer/producer of your foods?
- Extremely important
  - Very Important
  - Moderately important
  - Slightly important
  - Not at all important
7. As a consumer, what influences your food purchases? (Select your top three)
- Price of item
  - Produced locally
  - Seasonality (produce in season)
  - Food trends/recipes
  - Quality of food
  - Farm practices (e.g., organic, regenerative, animal welfare)
  - Amount of packaging (plastics used)
8. Where do you acquire your food? (Select all that apply)
-

- Farm store/Farm gate sale
- Small/Independent grocer
- Large retailer/Chain grocer
- Artisanal shops and bakeries
- Farmers' markets
- Food banks/other charitable food sources
- I grow/bake/preserve my own food

9. What large retailer/chain grocer do you shop at?

10. Are there locally produced goods at your grocery store?

- All the time
- Sometimes
- Not typically
- Not at all
- Do not know

11. Can you recognize locally produced goods?

- Yes
- No

12. Would you purchase a local product over a similarly priced imported product?

- If yes, why:
- If no, why:

13. How frequent do you purchase locally produced food?

- 3 times a week or more
- 1-2 times a week
- 2 times a month
- 1 time a month
- Every other month
- 4 times a year
- 2 times a year
- Once a year
- Never

14. How easy is it to find and purchase local food in New Tecumseth?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult

- Very difficult

15. Are there any ways you can think of that would strengthen the local food system in New Tecumseth?

16. If you're interested in a follow-up discussion on local food systems, please share your email:

### **FARMERS/PRODUCERS**

1. What products do you grow/produce or intend to grow/produce?
  2. What scale is/will be your farm operation?
    - Small-scale (10 acres or less)
    - Medium scale (11-249 acres)
    - Large-scale (250 or more acres)
  3. What statement best describes or will best describe your land ownership status?
    - I own all of the land I farm
    - I rent all of the land I farm
    - Own some of the land and rent some of the land I farm
    - Other: (please list)
  4. Does the cost of land create a barrier to the viability of your farm business?
    - Definitely yes
    - Probably yes
    - Might or might not
    - Probably not
    - Definitely not
  5. What are three main reasons that informed your decision to select the site you farm?
    - Cost of land
    - Size of land
    - Agricultural capability
    - Proximity to buyers/market
    - Social factors/farming community
    - Agricultural business environment/networks
    - Intergenerational farm/property
  6. Who is your primary buyer?
    - Direct friends/family
    - Direct to consumers – farm gate sales
    - Direct to consumers – farmers' markets
    - Retailer – chain grocery store
-

- Retailer – local market store
  - Restaurants – within New Tecumseth boundaries
  - Restaurants – outside of New Tecumseth boundaries
7. What are you currently doing/will be doing to participate in your local food network?
- Farmers’ markets
  - Community Supported Agriculture (local food box)
  - Summer “food” cycling trails
  - Pick your own
  - Farm store
  - Food hub
  - Other: (please list)
8. Would you be interested in participating in:
- Farmers’ markets
  - Community Supported Agriculture (local food box)
  - Summer “food” cycling trails
  - Pick your own
  - Farm store
  - Food hub
  - Other: (please list)
9. Where do you source/will you source a majority of your farm labour?
- Volunteers/Interns/WOOFers
  - Family operation
  - Locally in New Tecumseth
  - Ontario
  - Other Canadian provinces/territories
  - Internationally (SAWP)
10. If opportunities arose, would you be interested in selling your product to: (Select all that apply)
- Local grocers
  - Artisanal shops
  - Restaurants within New Tecumseth boundaries
  - All of the above
11. What barriers do you face in producing local food?
12. What barriers do you face in marketing local food?
13. Are the supports provided by the local municipality to your farm business adequate?
-

- Extremely inadequate
- Somewhat adequate
- Neither adequate nor inadequate
- Somewhat adequate
- Extremely adequate

14. What would you like to see more of from the Town of New Tecumseth to support local food system?

15. If you're interested in a follow-up discussion on local food systems, please share your email:

## APPENDIX C – KEY INFORMANTS

Name	Title
Ruth Walker Scott	Economic Development Officer, County of Simcoe – Economic Development
Kathryn Stephenson	County of Simcoe – Tourism
Leah Emms	Member Service Representative for Peel, Simcoe & York, Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Jocelyn Beatty	Rural Planner, OMAFRA
Carolyn Puterbough	Economic Development Advisor, Simcoe, OMAFRA
Linda Spurr	General Manager, Alliston BIA
Susan Lacoucci	President, Beeton and Tottenham BIA
Becky Breedon	Economic Development Officer, Town of New Tecumseth, Economic Development
Katie Huddleston	Supervisor, Culture, Town of New Tecumseth, Cultural Heritage
Emily Sousa	Land Use Policy Analyst, Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Laura Northey	Communications & Engagement Director Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario
David Cohlmeier	Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario
Administrative Assistant	Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle

## APPENDIX D – WORKSHOP GUIDE

**Date and Time: Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, 12:00pm- 1:30pm**

**Facilitators:**

Project Leads: Nicole Cupolo  
Nora Salami  
Jennifer Aikman

**Town of New Tecumseth:**

Madeline Gibson, Senior Planner  
Jennifer Best, Director

**Participants:**

Local producers from the list provided by key stakeholders and focus group invitations.

**Agenda (90 minutes):**

12:00 – 12:15	15 mins	Welcome and Introductions
12:15 – 12:20	15 mins	Overview of the Local Food Network Project
12:20 – 12:25	5 mins	Workshop Design and SWOT Analysis
12:25 – 12:40	15 mins	Breakout 1: Strengths Assessment
12:40 – 12:55	15 mins	Breakout 2: Weaknesses Assessment
12:55 – 13:10	15 mins	Breakout 3: Opportunities Assessment
13:10 – 13:25	15 mins	Breakout 4: Threats Assessment
13:25 – 13:30	5 mins	Summarise Results and Next Steps

**Introduction**

- Welcome participants
- Introduce Guelph partnership and students
- Inform participants that we will be recording the session and taking notes of the discussion (and then begin recording)
- Icebreaker opening (Intro: name, connection to NT agricultural industry, small-scale/large-scale, personal and business interests, type of produce, reason for attendance etc.)
- Land acknowledgement

**Presentation**

- Workshop objectives and agenda
- A brief overview of the project and current update

## SWOT Analysis

### Overview

## SWOT Analysis

### Overview

- Provide an overview of the SWOT analysis process.
- Define SWOT analysis and explain its importance in identifying the internal and external factors that can guide the local food network framework and action plan.
- Explain the four elements of SWOT.

### Strengths

Facilitate discussion among participants to identify **strengths** and provide examples that producers may have, such as access to resources, skilled labour force, and prime agricultural land use.

#### Guiding questions:

- Thinking about local food in New Tecumseth please describe what is currently working? [*Prompt: what policies, programs, assets, farming networks exist related to local food.*]
- What advantages, such as resources and assets, does the NT local food network have over others?
- What strengths can be built upon to improve the current local food network?
- What strengths can be leveraged to build partnerships and encourage farmers to sell to local consumers?

#### Probing questions:

- Do you know of any local food initiatives in other communities that are appealing to you? How do you see New Tecumseth achieving this?
- How would a local food network improve your farm business?
- What new partnerships would you be most looking forward to (i.e., restaurants, farm stores etc.)

### Weaknesses

Facilitate discussion among participants to identify **weaknesses** and provide examples that producers may have, such as limited access to capital and local markets.

#### Guiding questions:

- What needs development? What are the internal barriers or challenges that impact the community's ability to deliver on a local food network?
- What are the biggest challenges you face in your operations?
- Are there any obstacles that prevent you from scaling your business?
- What are some weaknesses of the current local food network in NT?
- What challenges do local farmers face in accessing markets, resources, or customers?

#### Probing questions:

- What areas need improvement to make the local food network more profitable and resilient?

- Are there any logistical or supply chain issues that could be improved?
- Are there labour force challenges that impact farming operations in NT?
- Does the municipality provide adequate support for your farm business?

### **Opportunities**

Facilitate discussion among participants to identify **opportunities** and provide examples that producers may have, such as demand for locally produced food, government initiatives for agriculture, or new markets for value-added products.

Guiding questions:

- What opportunities do you see for local food in New Tecumseth? Where is there untapped potential? What have you seen elsewhere that you would like to see in New Tecumseth?
- What opportunities exist for the local food network to expand and/or improve?
- What potential partnerships or collaborations could be formed to strengthen the local food network?

Probing questions:

- What market niches that exist that the local food network could fill or capitalize?
- What trends or changes in the agricultural industry could benefit the local food network?
- Are there any grants or funding opportunities available in the region that you can take advantage of?
- Are there any specific local food products or crops you would like to see prioritized in NT?

### **Threats**

Facilitate discussion among participants to identify **threats** and provide examples that producers may have, such as municipal policies, climate change, and crop yield.

Guiding questions:

- Are there other external factors that create challenges for creating a local food network in New Tecumseth?
- What competition exists from neighbouring food networks?

Probing questions:

- What policy or regulatory reforms could impact the local food system or your business operations?
- Are there any economic or consumer behaviour changes that could negatively impact your sales (e.g., e-commerce)?

### **Conclusion**

- Summary of the main SWOT findings
- Identification of key areas for action

### **Wrap-up and Next Steps**

- Provide next steps and opportunities for further engagement and collaboration (survey and public awareness)
- Thank participants for their time and contribution.

## APPENDIX E – KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

### New Tecumseth Food Network Project Questions for Key Informant Interviews

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**Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today, and to conduct an interview to inform our analysis and recommendation regarding a local food network for New Tecumseth.**

**We have 45 minutes for the interview which allows approximately 7-9 minutes per question. I will keep track of our time as we go and may prompt you to move to the next question as needed.**

1. Please describe your organization (and/or your role in your organization) and outline its role with regards to local food in the Town of New Tecumseth.
2. We are conducting an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to local food in New Tecumseth. Starting with strengths: thinking about local food in New Tecumseth please describe what is currently working? [*Prompt: what policies, programs, assets, farming networks exist related to local food.*]
3. Thinking about areas of weakness, what needs development? Where are there internal barriers or challenges that impact the community's ability to deliver on a local food network?
4. What opportunities do you see for local food in New Tecumseth? Where is there untapped potential? What have you seen elsewhere that you would like to see in New Tecumseth?
5. Are there other external factors that create challenges for creating a local food network in New Tecumseth?
6. [*Time permitting*] Is there anything else related to local food that you haven't raised that you think we should be aware of?

**Thank you again for your time today. Your feedback is valuable to us.**

**We will be consolidating the results of this analysis and using this information to develop recommendations within our final report which we will share with you if you are interested.**