

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 23, 2019

Item 1, Report No. 32, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on October 23, 2019.

1. YORK REGION AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD STRATEGY - UPDATE TO CITY OF VAUGHAN

The Committee of the Whole Committee recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management, dated October 16, 2019, be approved; and**
- 2) That the booklet titled “Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector Strategy, Executive Summary”, be received.**

Recommendations

1. THAT the presentation, “York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy”, provided by staff from York Region’s department of Planning & Economic Development, Corporate Services, BE RECEIVED for information purposes.

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Wednesday, October 16, 2019

WARD(S): ALL

**TITLE: YORK REGION AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD STRATEGY –
UPDATE TO CITY OF VAUGHAN**

FROM:

Jason Schmidt-Shoukri, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

York Region staff are providing local municipal Council's with a presentation on the York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy and how the Region collaborates with local municipal partners and the Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee to execute the Strategy. The update also notes progress on the outcomes of the projects implemented to date and explores future collaboration.

Report Highlights

- The agriculture and agri-food sector is a significant contributor to York Region's economy, providing 57,000 direct jobs through 270 manufacturers and distributors
- The York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy is on track to implement 45 actions in five strategic goal areas
- The York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy is being recognized in the updated Green Directions Vaughan 2019 and will be used to inform the City's Official Plan Review

Recommendations

1. THAT the presentation, “York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy”, provided by staff from York Region’s department of Planning & Economic Development, Corporate Services, BE RECEIVED for information purposes.

Background

York Region’s Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy (Strategy) was endorsed by Regional Council in October 2017. The Strategy identifies objectives defined within five strategic goal areas and 45 action items to be implemented over five years. The five strategic goal areas are to:

1. Strengthen communication and collaboration with York Region, local municipalities and the agri-food sector,
2. Support the agri-food sector through integrated land use planning and economic development,
3. Support increased capacity for value added agri-food processing and support services,
4. Leverage location within the GTA and proximity to customers through direct farm marketing and meet demand for local food production, and
5. Provide support for business retention and expansion of primary agricultural production within York Region.

On May 16, 2019, Regional Council received an update report from Regional staff, which outlined the implementation of the Strategy and included: stakeholder outreach and engagement; and a progress status of the action items. The progress status identified 31 of the 45 actions items have either been initiated or planned, and four short-term activities were completed in 2018. Council also approved the Terms of Reference for the York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee, formerly called the Agricultural Advisory Liaison Group.

Green Directions Vaughan 2019, the City’s community sustainability plan that is being updated, recognizes the Strategy and includes a new objective and three new actions to support local agriculture and local food to promote healthy lifestyles and social cohesion.

Previous Reports/Authority

The Regional Municipality of York Staff Report, York Region Agriculture and Agri-food Update and Strategy (October 19, 2017) can be found at the following link:

<https://www.york.ca/wps/wcm/connect/yorkpublic/22ee2d68-ab89-44e9-94d3-76dac5fd4cde/oct+12+agri+ex.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>

The Regional Municipality of York Staff Report, 2018 Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy Update and Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee Terms of Reference (May 9, 2019) can be found at the following link:

<https://yorkpublishing.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=5156>

Analysis and Options

The 2016 Census report on agriculture from Statistics Canada identifies over 3,447 hectares of farmland in Vaughan that generates a total gross revenue of over \$26 million. In addition to contributing to the local and regional economy, a vibrant agriculture and agri-food sector can positively impact human health and climate change by promoting local food and a plant-based diet.

City staff will continue to review the Strategy to inform the City's Official Plan Review, Master Plans, and relevant City projects. A number of City-led projects have already contributed to implementation of the Strategy, including:

- Distributing the York Region Farm Fresh Map 2018 and 2019 at Environmental Days and other City events
- Completing a local food awareness campaign in the Summer and Fall of 2018 supported by \$11,000 in funding from the Greenbelt Fund
- Growing the City's community garden program and local food education in collaboration with the York Region Food Network
- Making progress on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge by creating pollinator habitat and ongoing community outreach, including an Urban River Valley project in September 2019 funded in part through the Greenbelt Foundation and Park People

Staff from Vaughan will continue to attend Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee meetings and support the Woodbridge Village Farmers Market.

Financial Impact

The review of the York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy will be incorporated into departmental Business Plans and budgets for Economic and Cultural Development,

Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability, and Parks and Forestry Operations to assess financial implications for potential future projects.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

The York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy is consistent with the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan and is related to four strategic priority areas, including:

- City Building
- Environmental Stewardship
- Active, Safe and Diverse Communities
- Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital

Conclusion

City staff will continue to work with York Region staff, businesses and other stakeholders to identify projects that can contribute towards the implementation of the Agricultural and Agri-Food Strategy.

For more information, please contact: Ruth Rendon, Senior Environmental Planner ruth.rendon@vaughan.ca or (905) 832-8585, ext. 8104.

Attachments

1. Presentation on the York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy

Prepared by

Ruth Rendon, Senior Environmental Planner, extension 8104

Tony Iacobelli, Manager of Environmental Sustainability, extension 8630

Bill Kiru, Director of Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability, extension 8633

ATTACHMENT 1

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD STRATEGY

UPDATE TO CITY OF VAUGHAN
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Jonathan Wheatle, Manager, Strategic
Economic Initiatives &

Meena Hassanali, Agriculture and Agri-
Food Business Specialist

October 16, 2019



AGENDA

1

Agriculture and Agri-Food in the Region & Vaughan

2

York Region's Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy
Accomplishments

3

Collaboration and Alignment with Vaughan

4

Looking Ahead

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD SECTOR IN YORK REGION

 **700+**
farm-based
operations

 **57,000**
direct jobs in
agri-food

#1 gross farm receipts
per acre compared to
surrounding regions

 **270**
food and beverage
manufacturers and
distributors

\$2.7 billion
agri-food
sector GDP

140,000+
acres of farmland



AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD SECTOR IN VAUGHAN



56
farms

\$26+
million total
gross farm receipts

HIGH NUMBER OF:

- bakery and tortilla manufacturers
- sugar and confectionary products
- food merchant wholesalers
- dairy products manufacturers

124
food and
beverage
manufacturers

4 community gardens
to support urban
agriculture

133
food and beverage
wholesalers

8,700+ agri-food manufacturing/
distributor jobs



COMMITMENT TO AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD SECTOR

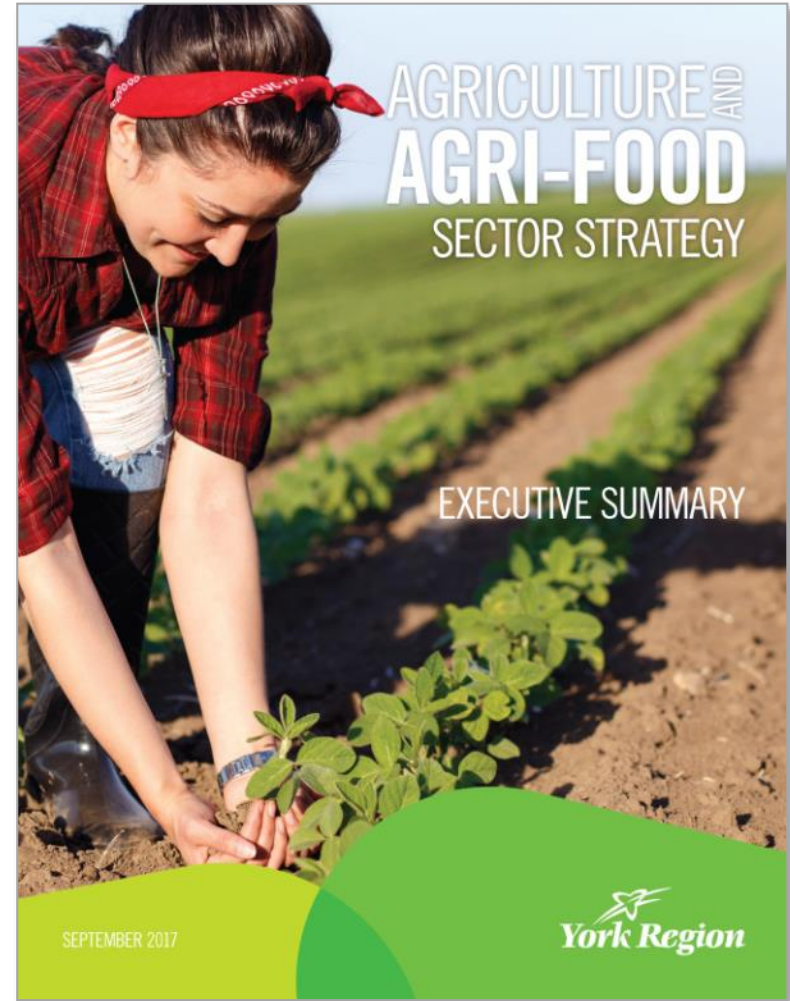
- Council has long recognized the importance of agriculture
- Vibrant and sustainable agri-food sector
 - Vision 2051
 - Regional Official Plan
 - Strategic Plan
 - Economic Development Action Plan
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee
- Collaborative effort with local municipalities
- In 2017 Council approved an Agriculture and Agri-food Strategy



STRATEGY UPDATE

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

- Understand the economic impact of the agriculture and agri-food sector
- Identify gaps and key areas of focus
- Recommend actions for the Region, local municipalities and stakeholders
- Support and grow York Region's agricultural and agri-food sector



www.York.ca/agrifood

FIVE STRATEGIC GOAL AREAS

- 1** Strengthen communication and collaboration between York Region, local municipalities and stakeholders
- 2** Support the agri-food sector through integrated land use planning and economic development
- 3** Support increased capacity for value added processing and support services
- 4** Leverage the Region's location within the Greater Toronto Area through direct farm marketing to meet demand for local food production
- 5** Provide support for business retention and expansion of primary agricultural production

5 STRATEGIC GOALS WITH 45 ACTION ITEMS

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION IS ON TRACK

Short-term items completed

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Business Specialist
- Strategic communications plan
- Consultations on the Provincial Agricultural Systems review
- Revitalized York Farm Fresh and collaborated on the development of the annual York Farm Fresh Guide Map



ALIGNMENT WITH CITY OF VAUGHAN



LOCAL FOOD PROMOTION



AGRI-FOOD EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Agri-Food Stakeholders Outreach

- Hosted or participated in over 50 workshops, events and meetings engaging 3000 stakeholders

Four Education Workshops for Agri-food Industry

- Succession Planning Workshops
- Business Waste Reduction Forum in Vaughan
- Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance – Asset Mapping Workshop



STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS

100,000+
impressions

2.4%
average
engagement
rate

2,300+
engagements

#loveYRFood #YorkRegionAg



Updated as of September 2019

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Purpose: To provide advice on agriculture, agri-food and rural matters in York Region
- Newly appointed Advisory Committee
 - Revised Terms of Reference with new term of Council
 - Reflect the connection with the Strategy
 - Expand membership: Added agri-food presence to reflect representation across the value chain

LOOKING AHEAD

- Continued education and outreach
- Showcase and support agricultural innovators/champions
- Agri-food business directory
- Local food awareness education campaign
- Holland Marsh Economic Impact Study



QUESTIONS

Planning and Economic Development

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