TOWNSHIP OF LANGLEY FOOD HUB WORKSHOP REVIEW

WD Poppy Secondary School

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TofL Food Hub Project Background

- To build on the existing technical work and community and stakeholder dialogue around establishing a food hub for the Township of Langley
- The study will explore and test the overall feasibility, of a food hub model:

1. Buy in from stakeholders
2. Identify key players
3. Possibilities of location
4. Policy support
5. Financially feasible

TofL Food Hub Project Work Plan

- **Phase 1 Community context for a food hub in the Township of Langley –** Provide an overview of the context of the project, how the concept was initiated, what has been done to advance the concept and what are its long term vision and benefits for the community.
- **Phase 2 Develop the food hub concept and identify initial levels and types of interest -** Compile previous research on food hub best practices and needs of local food producers and buyers. Propose 2 to 3 food hub models based on feedback from local stakeholders and identify potential local partners.
- **Phase 3 Test feasibility of food hub options for Township of Langley –** test financial and operational feasibility of the food hub concepts and make practical recommendations on a food hub and its components.

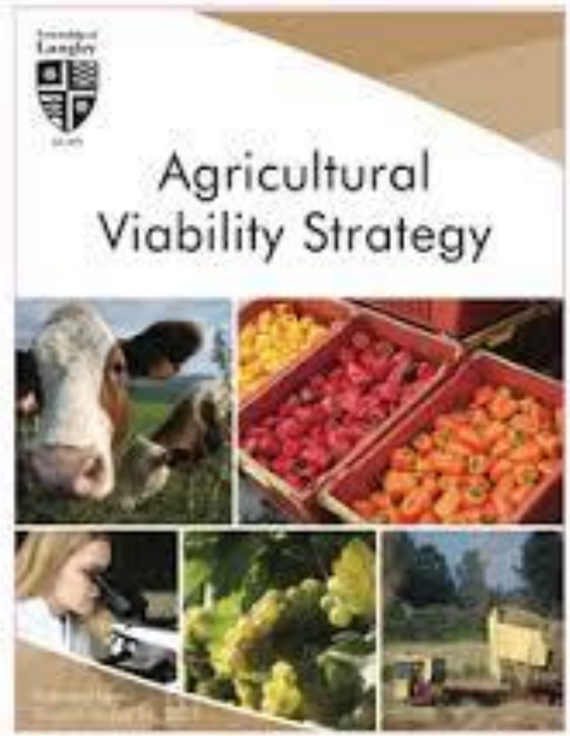
TofL is the 3rd largest growing region in BC

- Most farm lots are <4 hectares
- Wide range of farm business types
- There is a large demand for local product locally
- Infrastructure gaps

TofL's Agricultural Viability Strategy identifies a food hub as a key goal

AVS Initiatives

2.1.4	Promotion of agriculture
2.1.11	Agri and culinary tourism
2.1.12	Education & training
2.2.5	Processing and Value-Added
2.2.6	Farmers' markets
2.3.1	Protection of agricultural land



A food hub aggregates, distributes and markets local food locally

There are over 150 successful food hubs across North America

- 7 years old on average
- Average revenues of $2.8m/annum (2013)
  - 28% stores
  - 15% restaurants
  - 39% direct to customers (CSAs)
- 3% margin
- 38% are not for profits
- www.ngfn.org

TofL Food Hub Workshop Goal & Attendees

Workshop goal: engage stakeholders in developing a five-year food hub vision for the Township of Langley that addresses the needs and assets of local small and medium food producers and their customers.

- 39 people came (excluding ToL and Consulting team staff)
  - ~50% were farmers
  - One Township Councilor and chair of the AAC- Cnclr Dave Davies
  - Support-type businesses including food marketing and branding, financial institutions (Vancity), local universities (Kwantlen), and the farmers markets.
  - Possible food hub managers
  - One person in the room is already running a very small informal food hub off of their farm
- When asked why they were there
  - A few were there to learn
  - About 5 people were interested in food hub investment opportunities and involvement
  - The remaining participants seemed to be there for general information

Workshop Agenda

6:30 pm	Welcome and introduction
6:40 pm	Community Context for a Food Hub in the Township of Langley
6:50 pm	Overview of successful Food Hubs – Amy McCann
7:35 pm	Exercise 1a – exploring elements of food hubs through table discussions
8:05 pm	Exercise 1b – presenting key discussion points of each food hub element (5 minutes each)
8:40 pm	Exercise 2 – weighting of food hub elements through hot dot exercise
8:50 pm	Wrap up & next steps

What we learnt from Amy McCann's (Local Food Marketplace) presentation

- **Food hubs vary in size and function** - activities happen on a large continuum from aggregation in the back of trucks to using more sophisticated systems and facilities.
- **Health and safety regs can be a barrier** - success in other jurisdictions (e.g. Eugene, Oregon) have asked to be treated as a farmers market instead of a food distributor- that has more regs and costs associated with it.
- **Key success factors:**
  - Meaningful producer engagement, if not producer led process.
  - First manager/coordinator must have strong connections to the producers.
- **Difference in quality** from different farms can be managed through establishing quality guidelines, rejecting low quality product, and grading.
- **"Wholesale success training"** is a program in the US- can be expensive by super helpful for food hub entrepreneurs.
- **Hubs can manage organic and non organic**
- **Size and infrastructure:** >500k+ in sales likely required physical infrastructure, <500k in sales on-line, back of truck, on farm can suffice for facilities. Micro aggregation can happen at schools, in parking lots….
- **Food hubs vs. conventional distribution**: the connection to the producer, story of the farm is maintained through aggregation, processing, and distribution functions of a hub.
- **Onsite food services** may be more appropriate for an urban hub, given visible and geographic access needed to draw customers in.

What we learnt from workshop attendees

- A lot of interest in/support for a food hub for TofL
- Feedback corroborated with the findings from AVS
- The need to identify the food hub starting point for TofL (i.e. level of intensity and functionality)
- There are potentially people and orgs in ToL who could be or already are key players
- Participating producers may need ‘wholesale ready’ training
- Attendees want to do furthr networking amongst each other

Workshop attendee feedback on food hub elements

- **Agri-food distribution –** need for aggregation location and direct distribution
- **Indoor farmers' market –** physical structure, open >1day/week and year round, increase availability
- **Processing –** commissary kitchen providing access to market for small producers, central branding, on hand specialist support
- **Storage –** *no feedback*
- **Excellence centre -** provide training (growing, processing, waste management…)
- **Demonstration farm –** locate at existing farm and have hub co-ordinate programs
- **On-site food services –** may not be suitable for rural location

Attendees' top food hub priorities

- Farmers help farmers
- Farmers initiative
- Educating on local
- Be a viable market
- Access for small producers
- All year round physical/virtual market
- Doorway to wholesale
- Community connectedness
- Food rescue for eating
- Bring players together

Key learnings from the workshop

- Feedback aligns with AVS
- Interest from growers
- Possible key players identified including potential food hub managers
- Specific interest in indoor market, agri-food distribution and commercial kitchen space
- Food hub supports collaboration
- Food hub provides year round opportunities for small producers