

North Okanagan Food Charter

Vision

All residents of the North Okanagan have access to healthy food produced, processed and distributed through a sustainable food system.

Guiding Principles

A reliable source of nutritious food is a human right and this charter will work towards a regional food system that is:

1. **Accessible** – everyone can attain enough nutritious food from a reliable source, without stigma or discrimination
2. **Healthy** – wellbeing and vitality are fostered through the availability of high quality nutritious foods and the promotion of healthy eating
3. **Self-Reliant** – residents have opportunities to produce food for themselves. Agricultural land and food production capacity is protected and retained for future needs
4. **Culturally Sensitive** – respects the cultural food traditions and personal choice of all members of our community
5. **Economically Viable** – those who produce food for a living can earn a fair wage
6. **Environmentally Sustainable** – soil integrity, sensitive eco-systems, and bio diversity are preserved through planning, policy and good stewardship. The land, water, or air is not compromised for future generations.
7. **Resilient** – is prepared to withstand or adapt to changes in climate, economic instability, or disruptions in the water or food supply
8. **Community Driven** – community members have a voice in the policies and planning that influences their food system
9. **Celebrated** – local food is enjoyed and shared through promotions, festivals and events
10. **Collaborative** – communities, organizations, and individuals will work cooperatively to achieve this vision

Declaration

We (I) _____ declare our (my) commitment to the Vision and Guiding Principles of this document in a collective effort to ensure all citizens have access to healthy food in a sustainable regional food system.

Signed this _____ day _____ month, _____ year

Commitment to Action

Additionally we as organizations and individuals may choose to demonstrate this commitment as it falls within our personal abilities and organizational mandates by actively participating and partnering in a number of ways.

For example:

1. Advocate for income, employment, housing, health, and transportation policies that support access to healthy and local food and reduce the need to resort to emergency/charitable food provision
2. Support nutrition programs and healthy eating strategies that prevent diet-related disease and promote healthy development and learning in children - including support for breast-feeding families
3. Support community food programs that increase access to fresh foods such as food recovery programs, gleaning and Good Food Box co-operatives
4. Help provide opportunities for developing food skills through more community kitchens, food preparation and preservation workshops
5. Support the development of community gardens, urban agricultural projects and farm markets that provide convenient access to healthy and affordable foods at the neighborhood level
6. Promote and support household food production and backyard garden sharing opportunities
7. Support training and income-generating programs that encourage farming, agri-tourism and food enterprise within a community economic development model
8. Work with consumers, institutions and community organizations to promote healthy food purchasing practices or policies that support local farm and food businesses
9. Support and develop composting programs to use waste in renewable ways
10. Help create farmer-consumer links through a farm fresh guide, and a year-round or extended season farmers market with adequate infrastructure. Investigate a farmers wholesale market to provide for volume buyers
11. Consider forming farming and food co-operatives and community food storage facilities
12. Ensure the retention of the Agricultural Land Reserve while advocating for policies that support farmers to remain or become viable – ie extension services
13. Conduct a farmland and infrastructure inventory to match farmers and new farmers with available land and resources
14. Encourage farm trusts, land-use covenants and other ways of securing food producing lands near urban centres
15. Provide for skill-based courses and student participation in food production through educational institutions
16. Encourage food production practices that conserve water and soil integrity and reduce the need for chemical inputs
17. Encourage and prepare for disruptions/adaptations in the food and water supply through drought management, adaptive farm practices, personal and community food, water, and seed storage
18. Support events that celebrate the region's diverse agricultural and food assets
19. Help foster a civic culture that inspires support for the vision and guiding principles found in the charter.
20. Ensure the continued implementation of the charter by actively participating in food programs, projects, plans, policies and councils that provide a voice to the issues that impact our food system.

To work towards this vision, We, (I) will: _____