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Town of Aurora

Committee of the Whole Report

No. CMS26-001

Subject: York Region Food Charter Information Report

Prepared by: Phil Rose, Manager, Cultural Services

Department: Community Services

Date: January 13, 2026

Recommendation

1. That Report No. CMS26-001 be received for information.

Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the York Region Food Charter that was adopted in December 2024.

- The York Region Food Council started the process of updating the Food Charter in 2023.
- The Food Charter is a vision of thriving urban and rural communities where residents, organizations, businesses, and governments work together to create a resilient food system that fosters healthy communities and values food sovereignty.
- Town staff will continue to use existing resources to take concrete action to address food insecurity within Aurora

Background

In April 2024, Council passed the following resolution:

1. That Report No. CMS24-009 be received; and
2. That Council make a commitment to support the York Region Food Charter; and
3. That Council authorize staff to continue to work with local agencies and York Region in pursuit of food security for Aurora residents.

Since that time, the original York Region Food Charter, published in 2013, was updated as a guiding document for food-related policies and action throughout York Region.

Analysis

The York Region Food Council started the process of updating the Food Charter in 2023.

The process of updating the Food Charter focused on ensuring it reflects the voices, needs, and priorities of diverse communities and the current challenges facing the agri-food sector.

Over 10 months, five rounds of community consultations were conducted using a mix of surveys, focus groups, and public events. Nearly 300 community members and sector representatives contributed their insights. The updated York Region Food Charter (Attachment 1) was finalized and adopted by the York Region Food Council in December 2024.

The Food Charter is a vision of thriving urban and rural communities where residents, organizations, businesses, and governments work together to create a resilient food system that fosters healthy communities and values food sovereignty.

Accompanying the Food Charter is an Action Document (Attachment 2) that includes recommended actions for organizations that endorse the Food Charter. The Action Document identifies aspirational initiatives that the Town can choose to advance in collaboration with other groups, such as the York Region Food Council, York Region, the business community, and other public-facing organizations.

Some of these initiatives align with the Town's current efforts to address food insecurity, including support for the mini food pantries and community gardens on municipal property. The Food Charter presents additional tangible options for the Town to expand its efforts to combat food insecurity as added resources (i.e., budget and staff allocation) become available.

Town staff will continue to use existing resources to take concrete action to address food insecurity within Aurora.

The Town will seek meaningful partnerships that help create a resilient food system that fosters healthy communities. As new opportunities become available, staff will bring them forward during budget deliberations.

Advisory Committee Review

None.

Legal Considerations

None.

Financial Implications

Should any incremental funding requirements arise in support of the York Region Food Charter and the Town's efforts to combat food insecurity, staff will present them to Council for its consideration as they arise.

Communications Considerations

The Town will continue to work with community partners to share information on and promote the initiatives outlined in this report.

Climate Change Considerations

The recommendations from this report do not impact greenhouse gas emissions or impact climate change adaptation.

Link to Strategic Plan

GOAL: Supporting an exceptional quality of life for all

- Objective 2: Invest in sustainable infrastructure
- Objective 5: Strengthening the fabric of our community

GOAL: Supporting environmental stewardship and sustainability

- Objective 1: Encouraging the stewardship of Aurora's natural resources
- Objective 2: Promoting and advancing green initiatives

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. Council may provide further direction.

Conclusions

This report provides a summary of the updated York Region Food Charter. In support of improving access to food for the community, staff recommend continuing to work with local and regional partners to take concrete action to address food insecurity within Aurora.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – York Region Food Charter (2024)

Attachment 2 – York Region Food Charter Action Document (2024)

Previous Reports

CMS24-009, Food Insecurity in Aurora, April 2, 2024

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on December 11, 2025

Approvals

Approved by Robin McDougall, Director, Community Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer