5.0 FOOD PURCHASING AND CONSUMPTION

5.0 FOOD PURCHASING AND CONSUMPTION

5.1 Findings

An account of the total dollar value of food purchased in Middlesex-London, coupled with an account of how much of this expenditure is on local food, can provide the basis for an analysis of changes in local food purchasing behaviour over time. This can be correlated to purchasing and consumption trends of the general public to determine if there is a shift towards an increasing demand for and consumption of local food in Middlesex-London.

The objectives for this section include the following:

- To provide an account of the purchasing behaviour of local, healthy, sustainable food of citizens in the area from the standpoint of food service, food retail, public institutions and the general public;
- To provide an account of general food purchasing behaviour from the standpoint of food service, food retail, public institutions and the general public;
- To provide an overview of the consumption of local food in the area; and
- To provide an overview of eating habits of the general population and by subpopulation

This section looks at the total dollar value of food purchased by different types of establishments in both Canada and Ontario. While it cannot speak to the total dollar of food purchased in Middlesex-London or breakdown this expenditure by type of establishment in the area, it does provide the context for further research into food purchasing and consumption in the area. This section also looks at the purchasing of local food in Middlesex-London, the percentage of the population that complies with the daily-recommended fruit and vegetable intake, as well as the dollars spent by households on food in general and fast food specifically. Although, **there are significant gaps in information with regard to local food purchasing**, this section has tried to compile available data and accurately present it, and wherever possible, identify areas for further tracking, monitoring and research.

Purchasing of Food by the Foodservice Sector

The total dollar of food purchased in 2011 by full-service[93] restaurants in Canada (calculated as 30% of operating expenses) was $6,005,940,000, and for limited-service[94] eating places this

---

[93] Full-Service Restaurants are comprised of "establishments primarily engaged in providing food services to patrons who order and are served while seated and pay after eating. These establishments may sell alcoholic beverages, provide take-out services, operate a bar or present live entertainment, in addition to serving food and beverages" (Statistics Canada, *North American Industry Classification System*, 2007).

[94] Limited-Service Eating Places are comprised of "establishments primarily engaged in providing foodservices to patrons who order or select items at a counter, food bar or cafeteria line (or order by telephone) and pay before eating. Food and drink are picked up for consumption on the premises or for take-out, or delivered to the

number was $5,886,810,000 (Table 25). Combined, this amounts to $11,892,750,000 in food purchased by foodservice businesses across the country in 2011. Since 2008 there has been a steady increase in the total value of food purchased by foodservice businesses.

Table 25: Total Dollar Value of Food Purchased by Foodservice Businesses in Canada, 2008-2011 (Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, Table 355-0005 and Catalogue No. 63-243-X)

Canada	2008	2009	2010	2011
	$ Millions			
Full-service Restaurants				
Operating Revenue	20,043.1	19,728.4	19,977.0	20,659.6
Operating Expenses	19,378.4	19,026.8	19,233.6	20,019.8
Operating Profit Margin	3.3	3.6	3.7	3.1
Limited-service Eating Places				
Operating Revenue	18,569.6	19,162.0	20,163.3	20,711.2
Operating Expenses	17,510.4	18,128.4	18,978.9	19,622.7
Operating Profit Margin	5.7	5.4	5.9	5.3
Total Dollar Value of Food Purchased	**11,066.6**	**11,147.5**	**11,463.8**	**11,892.8**

In Ontario, the total dollar of food purchased by full-service restaurants (calculated as 30% of operating expenses) was $2,080,380,000 and for limited-service eating places this number was $2,508,120,000 (Table 26). Combined, this amounts to $4,588,500,000 in food purchased in 2011 by foodservice businesses in Ontario in 2011. Since 2008 there has been a steady increase in the total value of food purchased by foodservice businesses in Ontario. When compared to Canada, the increase in total dollar value of food purchased by foodservice businesses in Ontario over the four-year period (2008-2001) is identical (6.9%). If the food-purchasing behaviours of the foodservice sector in Middlesex-London mirror those across the Country and Province, then there is a real opportunity to partner with industry to increase the procurement and service of local food through collaborative and cross-sectoral local food purchasing and marketing efforts, such as the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance's Feast ON program (see section 4.1).

Table 26: Total Dollar Value of Food Purchased by Foodservice Businesses in Ontario, 2008-2011 (Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, Table 355-005 and Catalogue No. 63-243-X)

Ontario	2008	2009	2010	2011
	$ Millions			
Full-service Restaurants				
Operating Revenue	6,794.8	6,675.2	6,788.4	7,095.4
Operating Expenses	6,695.9	6,524.7	6,601.2	6,934.6
Operating Profit Margin	1.5	2.3	2.8	2.3

---

customer's location. These establishments may offer a variety of food items or they may offer specialty snacks or non-alcoholic beverages" (Statistics Canada, *North American Industry Classification System*, 2007).

Ontario	2008	2009	2010	2011
	$ Millions			
Limited-service Eating Places				
Operating Revenue	7,914.8	8,040.1	8,433.0	8,694.1
Operating Expenses	7,548.7	7,696.8	8,048.1	8,360.4
Operating Profit Margin	4.6	4.3	4.6	3.8
Total Dollar Value of Food Purchased	**4,273.4**	**4,266.5**	**4,394.6**	**4,588.5**

Purchasing of Food by the Retail Sector

The operating statistics of retail food establishments sheds light on the importance of including them in any food system change. For example, in 2012 the cost of goods sold for all food retailers in Ontario—including supermarkets and other grocery stores, convenience stores, and specialty food stores—was $23,364,000,000 (Table 27). While these food retailers do sell many non-food items, the cost of their goods sold remains an important indicator of their potential local food purchasing power. If the Middlesex-London community is able to partner with a large supermarket or grocery store chain to identify specific local seasonal products they may procure, then the local economic impact can be great. To supply the amount of food that such a large retailer will demand, the community may work on collecting product through a cooperative or food hub. Convenience and specialty stores can also help to increase consumer access to local foods creating distribution channels for small and niche or specialty producers; therefore, it is important to explore what collaboration between these small food retailers may look like.

Table 27: Operating Statistics, by Retailer in Ontario, 2012 (Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, Table 080-0023)

Type of Food & Beverage Store	Operating Revenues	Operating Expenses	Cost of Goods Sold	Gross Margin
	$ Millions			%
Supermarkets and other Grocery Stores	25,651.9	5,508.4	19,826.7	22.7
Convenience Stores	2,600.6	508.8	1,960.4	24.6
Specialty Food Stores	2,413.4	769.3	1,576.9	34.7
Total	30,665.6	6,786.5	23,364.0	

Purchasing of Food by Broader Public Sector Institutions

In addition to food purchased by the foodservice and retail sectors, it is important to consider food purchased by public institutions when planning food system change. The buying power of public institutions, if both directed and supported properly—for example, through procurement policy and institutional capacity building—could become a demand-led force that steers important food dollars towards local food systems. This would require a commitment by institutions to invest in developing the capacity to purchase and prepare minimum percentages of food from clearly defined regional and provincial sources before going beyond Provincial and

National borders to procure food. Fortunately, the Greenbelt Fund, through its Broader Public Sector (BPS) grant stream, provides support to public institutions towards this end.[95]

Greenbelt Fund's Broader Public Sector Grant Stream – Areas of Focus

1. Skills Development: Increase local food handling and preparation skills so that more institutions can create local food menus;

2. Organizational Change: Drive organizational change within institutions, distributors, and foodservice operators to make local food a priority;

3. Value Chain Collaboration: Forster value chain collaboration to enable better communication and stronger relationships between our farmers, processors, distributors and institutions;

4. Policy Change: Support changes to policies and practices that increase local food purchases and tracking by institutions; and

5. Innovation and Product Development: Facilitate innovation to find and/or develop local food products that meet the particular needs of our public institutions.

(Source: Greenbelt Fund, "Broader Public Sector Grant Stream," http://www.greenbeltfund.ca/broader_public_sector_grant).

According to *Ontario's Local Food Report*,

> The broader public sector [in Ontario] spends an estimated $745 million per year on food. [Therefore,] expanding local food purchases by our municipalities, hospitals, long-term care homes, schools, colleges and universities represents a significant market opportunity for our farmers and food processors.[96]

Information on BPS food expenditure, broken down by geography, is presently unavailable; therefore, the total dollar value of food expenditure by BPS institutions located in Middlesex-London is unknown. However, the number of BPS institutions in Middlesex-County, including municipal, academic, and health care institutions, should not be overlooked. A survey of local BPS institutions is one way to collect information on their food expenditure amounts and practices, as well as, assess their interest and capacity to help drive food system change.

---

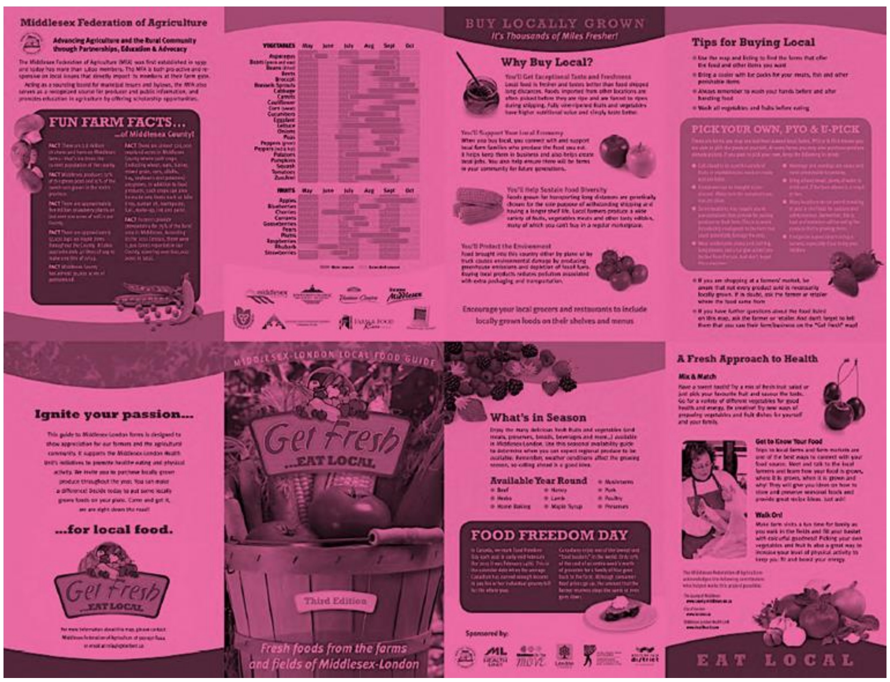
[95] Greenbelt Fund, "Broader Public Sector Grant Stream," http://www.greenbeltfund.ca/broader_public_sector_grant.

[96] OMAFRA, *Ontario's Local Food Report*, 2014-2015 Edition, http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/local_food_rpt.htm (July 29, 2015).

Purchasing of Local Food

Data on the total dollar value of local food purchases in Middlesex-London, alongside information about what types of establishments are purchasing local food—for example, BPS institutions, foodservice or retail businesses—and whether or not their purchases have increased over time, are important indicators of the supply and demand of local food. However, the tracking and tracing of local food purchases across the province remains an inconsistent and developing practice. This does not mean that local food purchasing is not taking place in Middlesex-London but rather that harmonized data on local food procurement (broadly defined) in the area was unavailable at the time of this Community Food Assessment.

Figure 44: Get Fresh Eat Local Food Guide (Source: Middlesex-London Health Unit, https://www.healthunit.com/eat-local-map)



The Middlesex-London Food Guide "Get Fresh Eat Local" (Figure 44) is a good example of a resource that has been developed to help consumers find and purchase local food. Created by the Middlesex Federation of Agriculture, and made available online through the Middlesex-London Health Unit, this guide takes the form of a comprehensive infographic and map that lists all of the places consumers can purchase local food. It contains 3 farmers markets, 31 places to purchase fruits and vegetables, 10 places to purchase meats and 10 places where honey, syrups, and jams can be purchased; making for a total of 54 places to purchase local food.[97]

[97] Middlesex Federation of Agriculture, *Middlesex-London Food Guide* "Get Fresh Eat Local," No Date, Web, at https://www.healthunit.com/eat-local-map.

Figure 45: Get Fresh Eat Local Food Guide (Source: Middlesex-London Health Unit, https://www.healthunit.com/eat-local-map)

Although this tool is an effective resource for consumers who may be both adventurous and have the time to travel around Middlesex-London to direct purchase their food, it does not assist the segment of the population who is time constrained and interested in purchasing their food primarily from one place, such as the grocery store. This is why events that build local food awareness are great ways to educate the public that may not be accessing or using such resources. Some Middlesex-London food system stakeholders are already collaborating on local food events, like Ontario Produce Day, that raise awareness about the seasonality of local food.

Ontario Produce Day: A Celebration of Local Food at a Time when It's Available

In response to the timing of Local Food Week—the province's official celebration of local food at the start of June—Middlesex-London farmers and distributors are coming together with other stakeholders to initiate a celebration of local food that is more closely tied to the season in which this food is available, in mid-August.

On August 15, 2015 Pfenning's Organic Farm, a 242-acre family-run farm located in New Hamburg, will joining other farmers at Globally Local, an organic distribution business located South of London. This unofficial Ontario Produce Day allows them to showcase their produce when it's at its most bountiful and for consumers to see who it is that is producing this food

(Source: London Free Press, "Event serves up a plethora of produce not available during the June food week designated under the Local Food Act," August 11, 2015).

Purchasing and Consumption Behaviours

According to *Canada's Food Guide*, the recommended daily number of food guide servings of vegetables and fruit that an individual should eat on a daily basis (Table 28) varies depending upon the age and sex of that person. In a position paper by the Middlesex-London Health Unit, entitled "Linking Health and the Built Environment in Rural Settings," it is stated "nearly 40% of the population of Middlesex-London reported that they ate five or more servings of vegetables and fruit per day in 2009/2010.[98] When this is compared to the percentage of Ontario residents who complied with the recommended daily intake of vegetables and fruit in 2012 (39.4%)—which is closely aligned with the national percentage (40.4%)—the percentage of Middlesex-London residents who meet the daily recommended intake is almost identical to that of both the Province and Country.[99] However, it was also reported that 89% of Middlesex-London residents *did not* meet their vegetable and fruit requirements in 2011, based on *Canada's Food Guide*, or put differently, 11% of Middlesex-London residents met the recommended intake of fruits and vegetables per day. [100] The large discrepancy between the 2009/2010 percentage (40%) and the 2011 percentage (11%) can be explained by the fact that the 2011 percentage reflects a reclassification of the data. This was done to account for the recommended number of food guide servings by age and sex, which is often more than 5 servings. This is important to note when considering the household food expenditure of Middlesex-London (below), and future strategies to increase fruit and vegetable consumption.

Table 28: Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings Per Day (Source: Health Canada, *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*, 2011)

	Children			Teens		Adults			
Years	2-3	4-8	9-13	14-18		19-50		51+	
Sex	Girls and Boys			Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Vegetables and Fruit	4	5	6	7	8	7-8	8-10	7	7
Grain Products	3	4	6	6	7	6-7	8	6	7
Milk and Alternatives	2	2	3-4	3-4	3-4	2	2	3	3
Meat and Alternatives	1	1	1-2	2	3	2	3	2	3

[98] Middlesex London Health Unit, "Linking Health and the Built Environment in Rural Settings: Evidence and Recommendations for Planning Healthy Communities in Middlesex County," 2013, Print, at p. 29.
[99] Statistics Canada, "Fruit and Vegetable Consumption, 2011," 2015, Web, at http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-625-x/2012001/article/11661-eng.htm.
[100] Middlesex London Health Unit, Harvest Bucks, June 2015, Web, at http://www.healthunit.com/harvest-bucks

In 2014, according to Statistics Canada's Food Expenditure Survey, the total dollar value of food purchased by households in Middlesex-London was $7,427.[101] This amounts to $142.82 per household/per week, or $571.30 per month. If the average number of persons in households in Middlesex-London is near to the average number in Ontario, which was 2.6 in 2011, then this works out to approximately $220 of food purchased per person per month.[102]

Looking more closely at food expenditure in Middlesex-London, one can see what types of food residents are spending their money on. The table below (Table 29) shows the percentage of food expenditure in Middlesex-London by commodity type. While the distribution of results in the table is in line with food expenditure in South Western Ontario, the breakdown of food expenditure is not the same for all Middlesex-London residents. According to the Middlesex-London Health Unit in 2009/10 nearly 8% of the households in Middlesex-London were considered moderately or severely food insecure, due to lack of money, compared to the provincial percentage of 7.6.[103] This percentage has increased since 2007-2008 when 7.2% of Middlesex-London residents and 7.8% of Ontario residents were food insecure due to lack of money; however, it is important to note that is does not reflect all of the dimensions of food insecurity that exist in reality.[104] For example, food insecurity can also be observed through the number of people accessing emergency food. The London Food Bank serves approximately 9,000 individuals a month; however, this number underestimates food insecurity because less than 25% of food insecure households use food banks (this number does not include other food banks in Middlesex-London nor those places serving emergency meals).[105] Therefore, based on a more robust definition of food security (see Glossary of Key Terms) a much larger percentage of the Middlesex-London population may be considered to be food insecure.

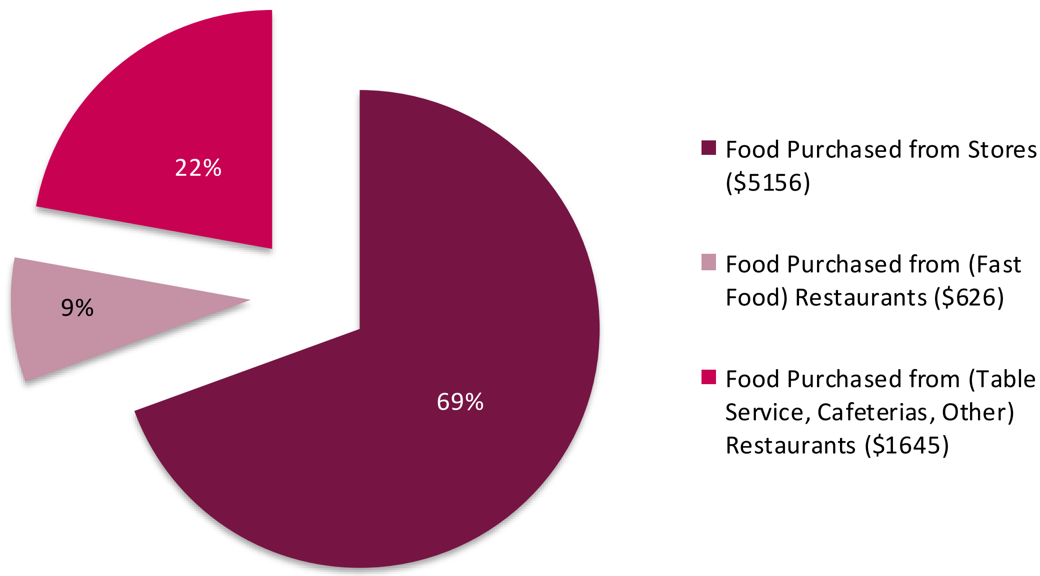
Table 29: Food Expenditure in Middlesex-London, by Commodity Type (Source: Food Expenditure Survey 2014)

Commodity Type	South Western Ontario Food Expenditure ($)	% of total	Middlesex Food Expenditure ($)	% of total
Meat	$680,160,435	21%	198,374,962	20%
Fish and other marine products	$100,303,328	3%	30,270,023	3%
Dairy products and eggs	$493,615,113	15%	144,667,240	15%
Bakery and other cereal products	$493,811,966	15%	144,635,514	15%
Fruit and nuts	$384,159,062	12%	115,192,726	12%
Vegetables	$329,313,914	10%	98,170,398	10%
Condiments, spices and vinegar	$99,739,255	3%	29,260,273	3%
Sugar and sugar preparations	$127,022,483	4%	36,259,013	4%
Coffee and tea	$56,695,401	2%	16,833,641	2%

[101] Statistics Canada, "Food Expenditure Survey, by Region," 2014.
[102] Statistics Canada, "Household Size, by Province and Territory," 2011.
[103] Middlesex-London Health Unit, "Food insecure in the previous 12 months due to lack of money," 2007/8, 2009/10, Web, at http://www.communityhealthstats.healthunit.com/chart/food-security/figure-229-food-insecure-previous-12-months-due-lack-money.
[104] Middlesex-London Health Unit, "Food insecure in the previous 12 months due to lack of money," 2007/8, 2009/10, Web, at http://www.communityhealthstats.healthunit.com/chart/food-security/figure-229-food-insecure-previous-12-months-due-lack-money.
[105] Child & Youth Network, "Poverty Trends in London," 2015.

Commodity Type	South Western Ontario Food Expenditure ($)	% of total	Middlesex Food Expenditure ($)	% of total
Fats and oils	$40,371,042	1%	11,650,327	1%
Other foods, materials and food preparations	$345,773,664	11%	103,080,985	11%
Non-alcoholic beverages	$135,896,914	4%	3,9405,869	4%
Total	**$3,286,860,580**		**$967,800,971**	

Figure 46: Total Annual Food Expenditure for Middlesex-London, per Household by Point of Purchase, 2014 (Source: Statistics Canada, Food Expenditure Survey)



The annual household food expenditure in Middlesex-London can be further broken down into food purchased from stores and food purchased from restaurants (Figure 46). In 2014, 69% ($5,156) of the food purchased annually by household in Middlesex-London is at stores while the remaining 31% ($2,271) of food purchased is from restaurants. Importantly, of the $2,271 of food purchased from restaurants, $626 is spent at fast food establishments. This makes for a total of $121,491,085 spent at fast food establishments by Middlesex-London residents in 2014.[106] While some fast food restaurants[107] are responding to consumer demand for more fresh healthy food options, the majority of limited-service eating places—of which fast food restaurants are included—serve unhealthy food. Fish and chip shops, hamburger stands, fried chicken take-outs, pizzerias, and doughnut shops are but a few of the establishments that Statistics Canada includes in the same category as fast food restaurants.[108]

---

[106] Statistics Canada, "Food Expenditure Survey, by Region," 2014.
[107] For example, Chipotle Mexican Grill is committed to "Putting the Food Back in Fast Food," through its Food with Integrity policy that mandates sourcing local whole food and cooking from scratch (Source: Chipotle Mexican Grill, "Food With Integrity," 2015, Web, at https://www.chipotle.com/food-with-integrity).
[108] Statistics Canada, *North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Canada*, *2012*, "All Examples –722512 – Limited-service Eating Places.

In 2013 the total annual food expenditure by household in Ontario was slightly higher (5.6%) than in Middlesex-London, at $7,843. The total annual food expenditure in Canada in 2013, however, is slightly higher, at $7,980 per household. Of the total annual food expenditure in Ontario, 71% is purchased from stores and 29% is purchased from restaurants.[109] These figures are close to par with food purchased by household at stores and restaurants by Middlesex-London residents. Interestingly, of the National food expenditure, 72.1% ($5,572) of food is purchased from stores and 27.9% ($2,167) is purchased from restaurants.[110] This means that even though Middlesex-London's household food expenditure is less than both the Province and the Country, the amount that households spend at restaurants is higher than both. Therefore, future action planning that is directed towards steering food dollars away from restaurants, especially fast food restaurants, and towards retailers of fresh, whole, healthy food can help to stretch residential budgets while increasing their health. However, this type of action needs to be combined with food literacy skills development work that empowers households to cook more often at home using fresh local ingredients. The Food Families program is a great example in London of how this is taking place at the community level.

Food Families

In London, neighbourhoods have been participating in Food Families, a dynamic program in which a group of neighbourhood families get together on a regular basis to form a network that supports, encourages, and mentors one another using food. This can take the form of purchasing, growing, sharing, learning and celebrating. The program aims to increase families' buying power and increase the sharing of practical and affordable ways to eat well.

Food Families was held in three neighbourhoods within London, Ontario: Carling neighbourhood (nine families), Central London neighbourhood (20 families), and Westminster neighbourhood (21 families). The evaluation completed on this project shows that participants enhanced their skills and confidence; gained knowledge, skills, and tools to eat health and make healthy choices; felt a greater sense of community, collaboration and deepened relationships between members of the program; and learned how to access new resources in their neighbourhoods.

(Source: Child & Youth Network, *Food Families Summary Evaluation Results*, 2015)

5.2 Gaps in Knowledge

Some important information on the purchasing of food across both Ontario and Canada, by type of establishment, was captured during this assessment. This information can be used to both contextualize and compare new data from Middlesex-London, as it becomes available;

[109] Statistics Canada, "Average Household Food Expenditure, by Province," 2013, Web, at http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/famil132a-eng.htm.
[110] Statistics Canada, "Average Household Food Expenditure, Canada," 2013, Web at http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/famil132a-eng.htm.

however, there were a number of areas where information on food purchasing in Middlesex-London had not yet been documented. These areas include:

1. The total dollar value of **food purchased** in Middlesex-London, over the last 10 years, by type of establishment;
2. The total dollar value of **local food purchased** in Middlesex-London, over the last 10 years, by type of establishment; and,
3. The total dollar value of **household food budget increase** through the purchasing of food that is either healthy, local or sustainably produced, compared to the average household food budget.

The above information will help to assess changes in food purchasing behaviour by households in Middlesex-London over time. It will also help to determine how much a household food budget may need to increase for residents in the area to make local healthy food purchasing a reality. A research study similar to a Nutritious Food Basket study but unique to a "local" and "sustainable" food basket in Middlesex-London would be a great asset to the community.

In addition to such a study, there is an opportunity for additional research on the general public's attitudes and behaviours toward healthy, local and sustainably produced food as well as the general eating habits by sub-population (broken down by age, gender, ethnicity, place of residence, education level, income level, etc.). The Middlesex-London Health Unit has started this process by collecting ongoing health related survey data—through the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System—related to public perceptions effecting purchasing and consumption of healthy, local and sustainably produced food.[111]

5.3 Strengths and Assets

In Middlesex-London there are a variety of material, financial, and cultural food system assets that relate to food purchasing and consumption. To start, the high amount of household expenditure on food purchased from stores, as opposed to restaurants, is a financial asset that underlines a separate cultural asset; that is, the widespread cooking of food at home. This is significant because households with a tradition of preparing and cooking of food are more likely to pass on food literacy skills to younger generations than households who do not engage in cooking. Another cultural asset that key informants brought up during the interview stage is the overall support for local food and the increasing number of consumers demanding information on where food is coming from. This change in buying habits and increased consciousness of the average consumer reflect a Provincial, National, and Global trend towards

[111] The Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS) began in 1999 as a pilot telephone survey of adults aged 18 years and older in Durham Region. The pilot project was a joint partnership between Health Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Cancer Care Ontario and the Durham Region Health Department. The idea was to pilot test a risk factor survey based on the Behavioural Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) used in each state in the U.S.A (Source: Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System, History, Web, at http://www.rrfss.ca/).

localizing food and celebrating where food comes from. This demand is driving more food businesses (material assets) in Middlesex-London to procure and serve local food and drink. Finally, in addition to many food retail stores, farm gates, and local food service champions, Middlesex-London is home to a large number of farmers' markets that can serve the food purchasing and consumption habits of the public. A financial asset related to these farmers' markets is the Middlesex-London's Harvest Bucks program. For more information on this program, please refer to section 3.

Table 30 lists all of the strengths and assets identified through the community food assessment process that pertain to this section of the report (please see 1.2 for Asset Legend).

Table 30: Strengths and Assets within Food Purchasing and Consumption

FOOD PURCHASING AND CONSUMPTION
50. SCOR food hub
51. Farmers markets in London
52. London Food Bank website
53. London Community Resource Centre
54. More restaurants are procuring and serving local food and drink
55. Increased local food procurement from foodservice sector
56. Community support for and interest in local food
57. Wine and Food Show
58. Summer festivals
59. Foodland Ontario sections in grocery stores
60. Cooking Matters cooking classes
61. School boards
62. Ontario Early Years Centre in London – some offer food skills for children
63. Hamilton Road Food Prosperity Initiative
64. Nutrition Ignition!

FOOD PURCHASING AND CONSUMPTION
65. Lawson Health Research Institute
66. Life Resource Centre (low budget nutritious cooking and skills development)

67. High retail food expenditure
68. Local food businesses (e.g. The Root Cellar Organic Juice Bar & Café, Forked River Brewing Company)
69. Farmers and flea markets (e.g. London Bazaar)
70. Farm gates in Middlesex
71. Harvest Bucks
72. Food Families Program
73. Coupons for Hunger

74. London Intercommunity Health Centre
75. Youth Opportunities Unlimited
76. Salvation Army
77. YWCA
78. Healthy Food for Healthy Schools Act
79. Forage City London
80. Women's Rural Resource Centre

5.4 Areas to Cultivate

Fostering a culture of informed food purchasing and consumption is a precondition for long-term food system change. The findings and gaps in knowledge in this section, combined with insights shared by key informants and survey participants, point to an important area to cultivate around food purchasing and consumption: the collection and sharing of information. To start, the discrepancy between the 2009/2010 percentage of Middlesex-London residents who indicated that they consumed five or more fruits and vegetables per day and the 2011 percentage of people who actually met their daily-recommended intake suggests there is a real need to grow food literacy in the area. Community members also indicated that there is a need to grow awareness around the true cost of fresh quality food. This awareness could help to combat false perceptions of how much food costs. Last, there is a lack of information on local food purchasing and consumption by the food retail, service and broader pubic sectors; therefore, there is a need to capture data on what types of food are being purchased, by type of establishment, and how much of this food is local. This data can then be used towards working with each sector to grow their local food procurement.

5.5 Opportunities for Change

A few opportunities to increase the purchasing and consumption of local food in Middlesex-London came up during the community engagement process, and food literacy remains the theme of these initiatives/activities. These opportunities include: setting up an interactive blog on food and food system issues; going into schools to educate and share information on local food and food system issues; educating people on the importance of not only whole foods but also which of these foods come from local farms; and setting up classes for people who have not been taught how to prepare food or how to prepare food on a budget. In addition to these initiatives, it is important to consider using outside resources and activities towards achieving changes in food purchasing and consumption. The Greenbelt Fund (see above) and the Feast ON program (see section 4.1) are two examples of Provincial assets that the community can access. Setting a food purchasing goal for Middlesex-London—for example, 15% of all food dollars are localized by 2020—is another great way for the community to align stakeholders from across the local food system under one comprehensive strategy. This will require everyone to work together on defining which activities will need to take place as well as measures that need to be used towards realizing this goal.

> "It's appalling the amount of imported food we have in stores that are available here locally grown."
>
> - *Survey Respondent*

5.0 Food Purchasing and Consumption

$11,892,750,000

SPENT ON FOOD BY THE CANADIAN FOODSERVICE SECTOR

$4,588,500,000

SPENT ON FOOD BY THE ONTARIO FOODSERVICE SECTOR