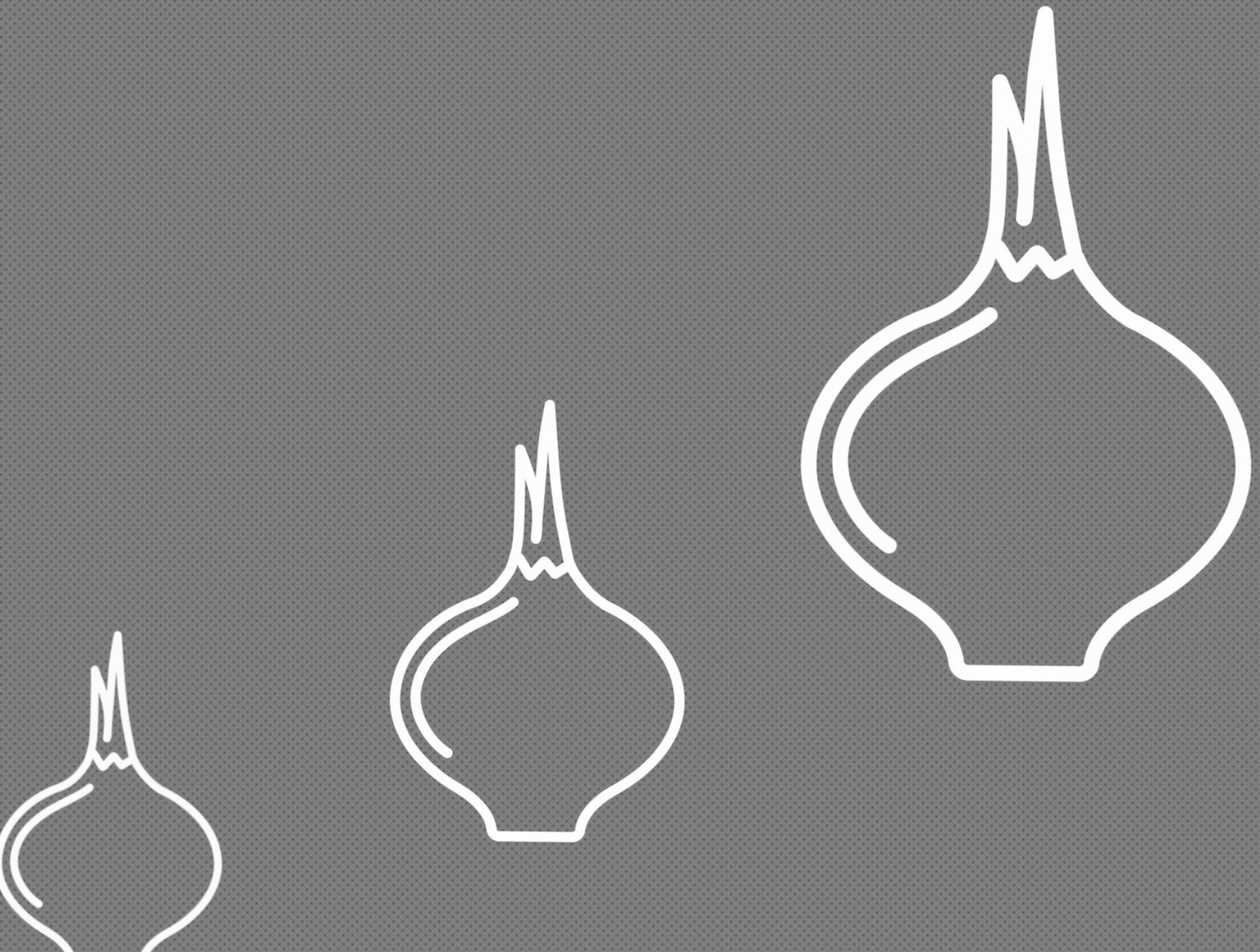


# 1.0 INTRODUCTION



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

#### *Food Security*

From November 13-17 1996, heads of state and government attended the World Food Summit in Rome, Italy, where they reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that all people are able to realize their right to be food secure. In the plan of action that was drafted they went on to define food security as existing “...when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.<sup>12</sup> This definition of food security was built upon three pillars— food availability, food access, and food use—but a fourth pillar, stability, was added at the World Food Summit on Food Security in 2009.<sup>13</sup> While these four pillars effectively capture the breadth of food security, the “Five A’s of Food Security” remain one of the most universally accessible breakdown’s of the concept.

#### **The five A’s of food security:**

- **Availability:** Sufficient food for all people at all times.
- **Accessibility:** Physical and economic access to food for all at all times.
- **Adequacy:** Access to food that is nutritious and safe, and produced in environmentally sustainable ways.
- **Acceptability:** Access to culturally acceptable food, which is produced and obtained in ways that do not compromise people’s dignity, self-respect, or human rights.
- **Agency:** The policies and processes that enable the achievement of food security.<sup>14</sup>

Food insecurity can be experienced at the individual level but it can also be experienced at the household, community, regional, national, and global levels. Therefore, when considering food security, it is important to think beyond the individual, and to consider the complex and systemic issues that affect groups of people at each of these levels. However, if the five A’s of food security can be achieved for all people, at all times, in a community for example, then this community is said to be food secure. For community food security to be realized, though, the community must first be able to exercise democratic control over the policies that govern the production and distribution of the food that its members consume. This is called *food sovereignty*.

---

<sup>12</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action*, November 13, 1996, Web, at <http://www.fao.org/wfs/>.

<sup>13</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Declaration of the World Food Summit on Food Security*, November 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Ryerson University, Centre for Studies in Food Security, “The Five A’s of Food Security,” 2016, Web, <http://www.ryerson.ca/foodsecurity/our-approach.html>.

## **Food Sovereignty**

On 27 February 2007, 500 food system stakeholders from over 80 countries gathered in the village of Nyéléni, in Sélingué, Mali, for an international forum on food sovereignty. There, the Declaration of Nyéléni was adopted and the idea of food sovereignty was entrenched into a global movement. The declaration states: “Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.”<sup>15</sup> Six pillars for food sovereignty were developed at the international forum in Nyéléni. Food Secure Canada’s (FSC) summary of these pillars follows below, in addition to a seventh pillar, which was added by members of FSC’s Indigenous Circle during the development of its policy platform, which has food sovereignty at its core.<sup>16</sup>

### **The seven pillars of food sovereignty:**

- Focuses on Food for People
  - Puts people’s need for food at the centre of policies
  - Insists that food is more than just a commodity
- Builds Knowledge and Skills
  - Builds on traditional knowledge
  - Uses research to support and pass this knowledge to future generations
  - Rejects technologies that undermine or contaminate local food systems
- Works with Nature
  - Optimizes the contributions of ecosystems
  - Improves resilience
- Values Food Providers
  - Supports sustainable livelihoods
  - Respects the work of all food providers
- Localizes Food Systems
  - Reduces distance between food providers and consumers
  - Rejects dumping and inappropriate food aid
- Puts Control Locally
  - Places control in the hands of local food providers
  - Recognizes the need to inhabit and to share territories
  - Rejects the privatization of natural resources
- Food is Sacred
  - Recognizes that food is a gift of life, and not to be squandered
  - Asserts that food cannot be commodified; (that is, treated as a product that can be bought and sold)

---

<sup>15</sup> International Forum for Food Sovereignty, *Declaration of the Forum for Food Sovereignty, Nyéléni 2007*, February 27, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Food Secure Canada, “What is Food Sovereignty,” 2014, Web, at <http://foodsecurecanada.org/who-we-are/what-food-sovereignty>.

If food security is a part of the vision for any community, then this community will need to prioritize the seven pillars of food sovereignty in its decision-making on and community action around food and agriculture. Only then will it develop the capacity to democratize and govern its local food system. The formation of a food policy group is one way that communities are able to mobilize around the goal of increasing their food sovereignty. Food policy groups are a platform for connecting a diversity of food system stakeholders in a community around food issues affecting their community. They may be structured as a council, collaborative, steering committee, working group, partnership, network, or team. Whatever shape they may take, food policy groups are most often involved with innovative food policy research, planning and development as well as direct community action around changes in their local food system that they would like to see. In Ontario, there are at least 28 food policy groups spread across the province. Sustain Ontario’s Municipal/Regional Food Policy Working Group has put together a comprehensive list (see below Table 1) of these food policy groups in Ontario, and the map below (Figure 1) shows where these food policy groups are located.

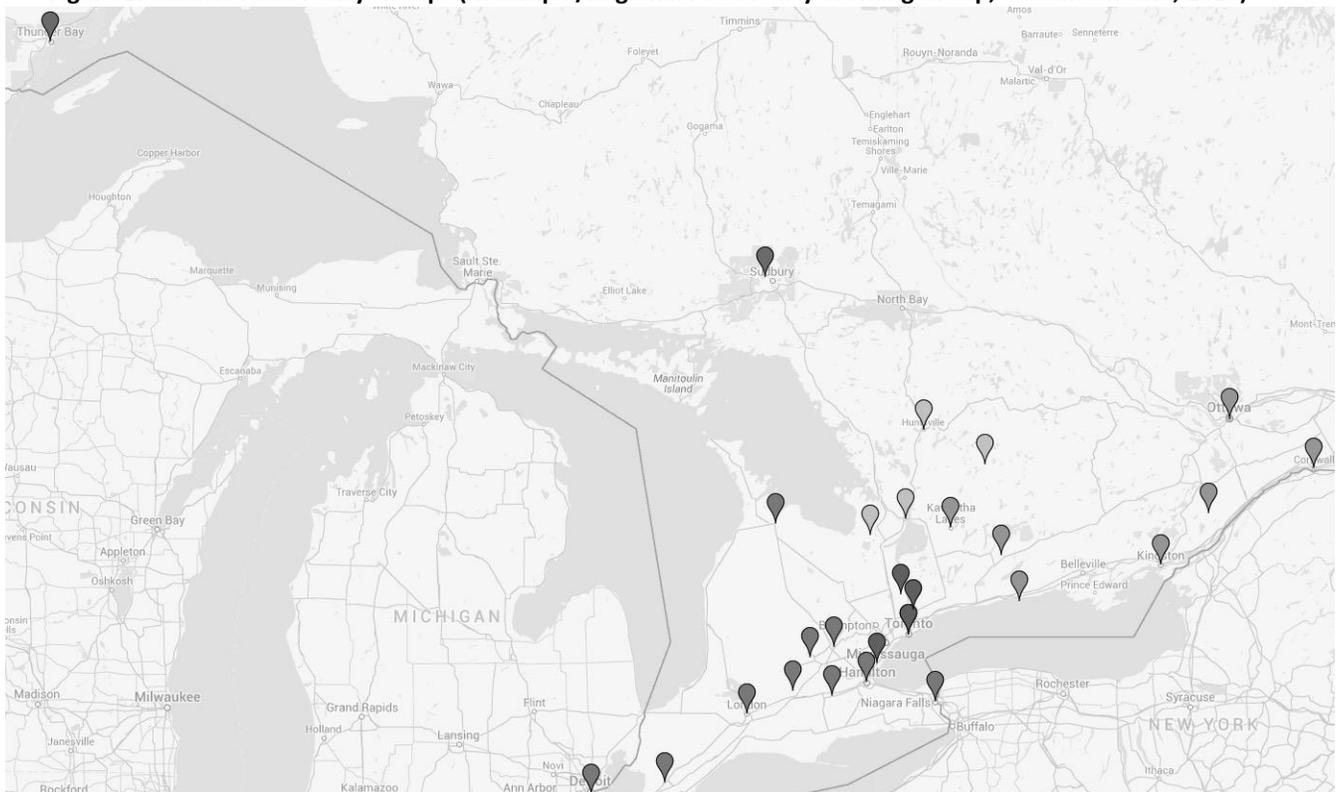
**Table 1: Ontario Food Policy Groups by Region (Municipal/Regional Food Policy Working Group, Sustain Ontario, 2015).**

<b>Central Ontario</b>
Food Partners Alliance Simcoe County
Growing Orillia’s Food Future!
Harvest Haliburton
Food Security Working Group (Huntsville)
<b>Eastern Ontario</b>
Foodcore Leeds Grenville Lanark Food Charter Partnership
All Things Food – Bouffe 360
Ottawa Food Policy Council
City of Kawartha Lakes Agricultural Development Advisory Board/Kawartha Lakes Food Charter Working Group
Food Policy Council for Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington
Peterborough Community Food Network
Sustainable Peterborough Working Group on Food and Farming
Northumberland County Food Policy Committee
<b>Greater Toronto Area</b>
The Halton Food Council
Markham Sustainability (Food for Change)
Toronto Food Policy Council
Toronto Youth Food Policy Council
<b>Northern Ontario</b>
Greater Sudbury Food Policy Council
Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy

Southwestern Ontario
Chatham-Kent Food Policy Council
Waterloo Region Food System Roundtable
Brant Food System Coalition
Food Matters Windsor Essex County
Middlesex-London Community Food Assessment Implementation Team
Food Secure Oxford
City of Hamilton Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee
Healthy Eating Workgroup (Niagara)
Guelph-Wellington Food Round Table
Grey Bruce Food Security Action Group

A community food assessment is a strategic way for a potential food policy group to narrow down which food sovereignty pillars need to be prioritized and what actions need to be taken towards creating a healthier and more sustainable food system. In other words, a community food assessment, according to Steven McFadden, is one way to help build community control of food, and this is what food sovereignty is all about.<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 1: Ontario Food Policy Groups (Municipal/Regional Food Policy Working Group, Sustain Ontario, 2015)**



<sup>17</sup> Steven McFadden, *The Call of the Land – An Agrarian Primer for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., NorLightsPress.com, 2011, Print, at p.107.

## **Community Food Assessment (CFA)**

A community food assessment is a participatory and collaborative process engaged in by members of a community who are interested in exploring their area's food system strengths and needs. The goal of a community food assessment is to increase community food sovereignty by informing decision-making around the policies and practices that define the local food system. Community food assessment objectives are to identify areas in the local food system to cultivate, resources to leverage, and actions to take that will help the community to become more food secure.

A number of broad strategies define a community food assessment. These strategies include: *exploring* the resources and assets in a community; *envisioning* what a local, healthy, and sustainable food system could look like, *identifying* food system areas to cultivate and *developing* work plans around priority action items; and then *implementing* action plans that include *measurements* for success.<sup>18</sup>

Ultimately, a community food assessment will inform decision-making on the policies and practices that define a community's local food system. Community food assessments can result in many benefits to the community. Some of these benefits include:

- Improved program development and coordination
- Positive change in public policy affecting the food system
- Greater awareness and understanding of food-related issues
- Development of new and stronger networks and partnerships
- Increased community participation in shaping the food system
- Addressing gaps in the community food security system
- Enhancing community capacity
- Boosting sustainability of the community food system.<sup>19</sup>

### **Middlesex-London Community Food Assessment Timeline**

Prior to Eco-Ethnomics Inc. being engaged to facilitate a community food assessment and prepare a community food assessment report, a group of motivated community associations and groups led a project to discover what a local food policy council might look like. The key milestones were:

---

<sup>18</sup> Sue Ross and Zena Simces, *Community Food Assessment Guide*, B.C. Provincial Health Services Authority, March 2008, Print, at p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Sue Ross and Zena Simces, *Community Food Assessment Guide*, B.C. Provincial Health Services Authority, March 2008, Print, at p. 6.

## 2014

- First Community Food Forum: in February, the London Community Foundation, City of London, and Middlesex-London Health Unit hosted a community food forum to discuss the potential for a local food policy council.
  - With unanimous support a small task force was struck to explore the potential structure for a food policy council
- Food Policy Council Model SWOT Analysis: the task force conducted a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis of four organizational models for a future food policy council.
  - The models reviewed included: municipality/health unit seated-structure, community-seated structure (not-for-profit), community-seated structure (grassroots), and collaborative partnership.
- Second Community Food Forum: in October, a second community forum takes place to discuss the development, framework, and activities for a future food policy council.
  - Attendees of the forum unanimously support a collaborative partnership model for a future food policy council. This model will be co-led by two community organizations: The London Food Bank and the Middlesex-London Health Unit
  - A community food assessment is recommended as the next step for the community, and it is decided that a community food assessment implementation team would be created to lead this.

## 2015

- CFA Implementation Team: a community food assessment implementation team is created. Members of the CFA Implementation Team include a diversity of food system stakeholders.
- Community Food Assessment: in April, on behalf of the Middlesex-London CFA Implementation Team, with the support of the London Community Foundation, City of London, and Middlesex-London Health Unit, the London Food Bank engages Eco-Ethnomics Inc. to conduct a community food assessment and prepare a community food assessment report
  - From July-November, Eco-Ethnomics Inc. conducts community-based research, including an environmental scan, key informant interviews, and a community survey
  - In December, the Middlesex-London community and food system stakeholders participate in an Asset Mapping session and an Action Planning session, to identify strengths and areas to cultivate across the local food system, and action items for consideration by a future food policy council.

## 2016

- Community Food Assessment Report: The Middlesex-London Community Food Assessment report is completed and will be used to inform future community action planning.

### **Community Food Assessment Implementation Team**

In early 2015 a Community Food Assessment Implementation Team was established. This implementation team is responsible for leading the community food assessment. The Implementation Team (see Table 2) is made up of members of key food system stakeholder organizations in Middlesex-London.

**Table 2: Community Food Assessment Implementation Team**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliate Organization</b>
Heather Blackwell	Western Fair District
Jamie Chowns	Sisters of St. Joseph of London
Michael Clark	Old East Village BIA
Mary Ann Colihan	Writer and local food advocate
Karen Eatwell	National Farmers Union
Cara A. Finn	Middlesex County
Ellen Lakusiak	Middlesex-London Health Unit
Don McLeod	Transition London Ontario
Margaret Milczarek	Community volunteer
Martha Powell	London Community Foundation
Jane Roy	London Food Bank
Tom Schell	Centre for Sustainable Food Systems
Cheryl Smith	City of London
Gary Zavitz	Fanshawe College

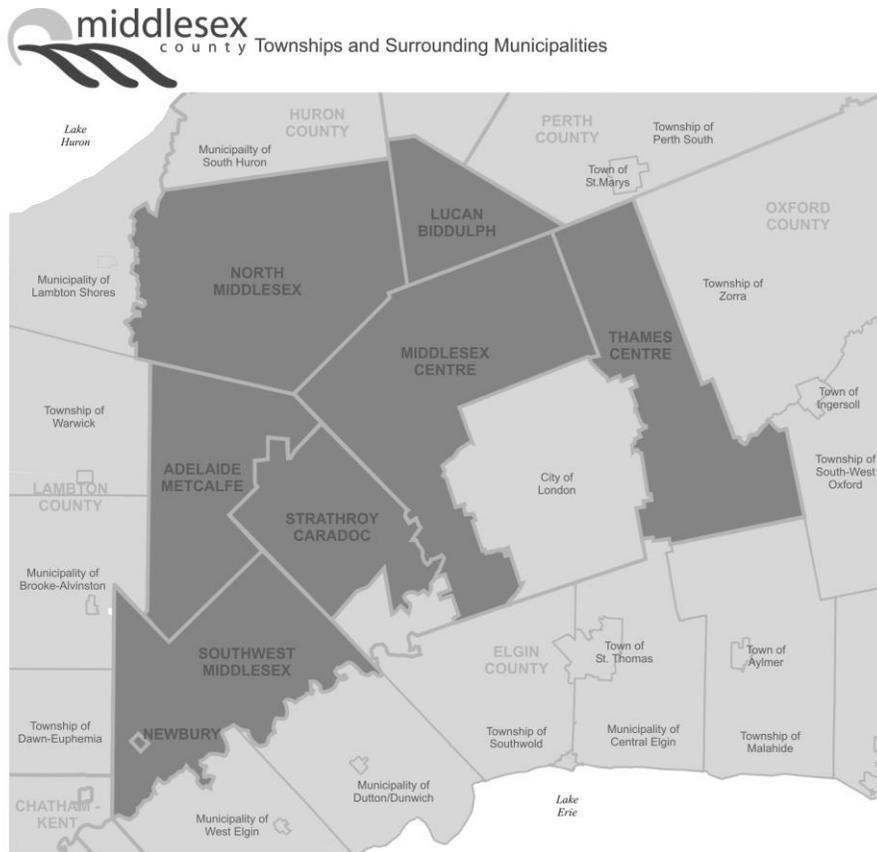
### **Context**

The Middlesex-London region is the geographical focus for this community food assessment. When Middlesex-London is referred to throughout this report, the entire geographical area of Middlesex County, including the three First Nations reserves within the census division and the City of London, is the focus. When London is referred to, the area of focus is the City of London. Finally, when Middlesex County is referred to all municipalities and reserves but not the City of London are the area of focus (see Table 3). Figure 2 shows the various geographical areas within Middlesex-London.

**Table 3: Municipalities and Reserves in Middlesex County**

Municipality	Reserve
Newbury	Chippewas of the Thames 42
Southwest Middlesex	Munsee-Delaware 1
Strathroy-Caradoc	Oneida 41
Thames Centre	
Middlesex Centre	
North Middlesex	
Adelaide Metcalfe	
Lucan Biddulph	

**Figure 2: Map of Municipalities Within Middlesex-London (Source: Middlesex County, 2015)**



The Middlesex-London Community Food Assessment is taking place at an opportune time for local food system support and food policy development in Canada.

In 2013, Royal Assent was given to Bill 36, the Government of Ontario’s *Local Food Act*, which has the following as its purposes:

1. To foster successful and resilient local food economies and systems throughout Ontario.
2. To increase awareness of local food in Ontario, including the diversity of local food.

3. To encourage the development of new markets for local food.<sup>20</sup>

More recently, in a number of his ministerial mandate letters, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau outlines specific Ministry goals, expectations, commitments, and responsibilities that relate directly to food and food systems. Most notably is the letter to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay. In this letter, Prime Minister Trudeau writes:

*In particular, I will expect you to work with your colleagues and through established legislative, regulatory, and Cabinet processes to deliver on your top priorities: Develop a food policy that promotes healthy living and safe food by putting more healthy, high-quality food, produced by Canadian ranchers and farmers, on the tables of families across the country....<sup>21</sup>*

## 1.2 Methodology

### ***Project Goal & Objectives***

The goal for the Middlesex-London Community Food Assessment project was to, first, develop an understanding of the Middlesex-London food system, and then second, allow this understanding to inform recommendations for proposed community action towards increasing food sovereignty and greater community food security in the region.

The objectives related to this goal included:

- Producing a snapshot of the Middlesex-London food system using diverse data points that can inform the focus of future community action planning;
- Identifying strengths and assets in the local food system and gaps in knowledge for future research;
- Engaging the broader community to create a better understanding of the local food system, from farm-to-waste;
- Amplifying grassroots organizations voices, and engaging in meaningful conversations with stakeholders about the local food system;
- Highlighting priority areas for the community to cultivate (i.e. opportunities for change) that will leverage the area's strengths and assets;
- Working towards a common understanding of issues affecting the Middlesex-London food system to share with key decision-makers;
- Recognizing key stakeholders who want to engage in food system change, and building capacity and leadership for including in future food policy council members; and

---

<sup>20</sup> Government of Ontario, *Local Food Act, 2013*, S.O 2013, Chapter 7, Web, at <http://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/13l07>.

<sup>21</sup> Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, "Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Mandate Letter," November 2015, Web, at <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-agriculture-and-agri-food-mandate-letter>.

- Providing essential background information for media and public education about the Middlesex-London food system.



Three phases defined the process used to achieve these objectives. These include: a review of existing resources and assets (Environmental Scan), participatory research and stakeholder engagement (Community Engagement), and the writing of a community food assessment report (Report Writing). A description of these three phases, and their related activities follows below.

**Figure 3: Food System Framework**



**Environmental Scan**

The initial phase for the community food assessment project involved the review of all relevant historical documents and previous food system scans or consultation processes (within the last 5-10 years). This was followed by the development of a food system framework (see Figure 3), which was used to structure an environmental scan and data collection of existing resources and data on the Middlesex-London food system. The framework consisted of 10 main categories, many subcategories, and approximately 300 indicators (i.e. relevant pieces of information).

With the assistance of the Community Food Assessment Implementation Team, the environmental scan collected data from a breadth of different sources. The secondary research phase concluded with an analysis of the food system based on all the relevant secondary source information. During analysis specific assets and strengths were identified, along with gaps in information and strategies for collecting additional information. The assets that were identified were categorized by asset type.

There are seven different types of assets that can be found in the food system. An explanation of each asset type, along with the icon used throughout this report to identify it and some examples, is provided in the below asset legend.

ASSET LEGEND			
Icon	Asset Type	Explanation	Examples
	Living	What you grow and your natural environment	Bacteria, soil, water, natural resources, animals
	Material	What you own and what you use	Buildings, vehicles, equipment
	Cultural & Spiritual	What you do and what you believe	Traditions, rituals, festivals, holidays
	Intellectual	What you know and ideas you have	Knowledge, ideas, innovations

ASSET LEGEND			
Icon	Asset Type	Explanation	Examples
	Experiential	Things you learn and risks you take	Success, failure, wisdom, embodied experience
	Financial	How much you have and what you spend	Money, credit, grants
	Social & Political	Who you know and who you trust	Friends, relationships, groups, influences

**Community Engagement**

The community engagement phase consisted of primary research and stakeholder engagement activities, and was broken down into four activities: key informant interviews, a community survey, and two community engagement sessions (i.e. community asset mapping and community action planning).

**Key Informant Interview**

The consulting team reached out to 69 key informants with knowledge of the Middlesex-London food system, including individuals from local food organizations, community development offices, emergency food suppliers, and municipal and provincial governments, as well as growers and producers, processors and distributors, educators and investors. In total, 30 individuals were engaged in hour-long interviews about the local food system and focused on:

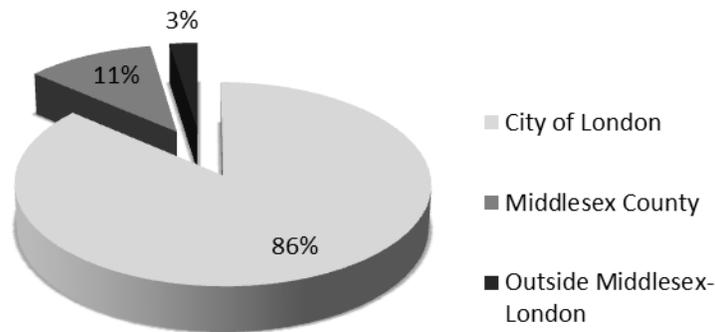
- Strengths and assets in the Middlesex-London food system;
- Major problems and/or challenges in the local food system;
- Solutions to these problems and/or challenges;
- Key opportunities in the food system and the potential contribution of stakeholders to the changes they want to see; and
- Gaps in information.

Numerous gaps in information were identified in the environmental scan. These gaps were brought up during each interview to see if interviewees had additional information they could share.

## Community Survey

Residents of Middlesex-London were engaged through an online community survey. Residents were able to complete the survey online, or through paper copies provided through local libraries. To encourage participation in the community survey, members of the Community Food Assessment Implementation Team reached out to their local networks, and provided them with a link to the survey in order to further distribution using their social media, newsletters, e-bulletins, and email. The survey was launched on the MLHU website on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and closed on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. To be eligible to complete the survey, respondents had to be 18 years of age or older and be a resident of London or Middlesex County. For completing the survey, each respondent received the chance to win Harvest Bucks (see section 4.0).

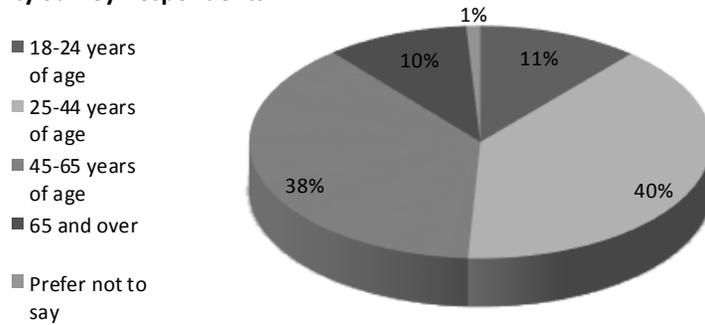
**Figure 4: Community Survey Responds by Place of Residence**



In total, 779 people completed the community survey and of this total, 97.55% (756 respondents) were residents of Middlesex-London. Overall, the survey sample was representative of the Middlesex-London population. As with many community surveys, there were some slight differences between sample characteristics and population characteristics. These differences are highlighted in the below figures and analysis of demographic data.

Of the 756 respondents who live in Middlesex-London, 86% are residents of London and 11% are residents of Middlesex County. Looking at the region as a whole, Middlesex County accounts for approximately 20% of the population, and only 11% of survey respondents; therefore, Middlesex County residents are slightly underrepresented in the survey sample.

**Figure 5: Age of Community Survey Respondents**



The age of survey respondents is consistent with the age demographics accounted for in the London Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), as per the 2011 Census.<sup>22</sup> The 2011 Census reflects a population breakdown of 12.85% of people between the ages of 18 and 24, 32.58% of people between the ages of 25 and 44, 35.69% of people between the ages of 45 and 64, and 18.85% of people between the ages of 65 and over.

On the whole, the community survey sample is also consistent with population statistics in regards to household income; however, it should be noted that community survey respondents with a household income of \$80,000 or more are underrepresented by 10% when compared to population statistics.

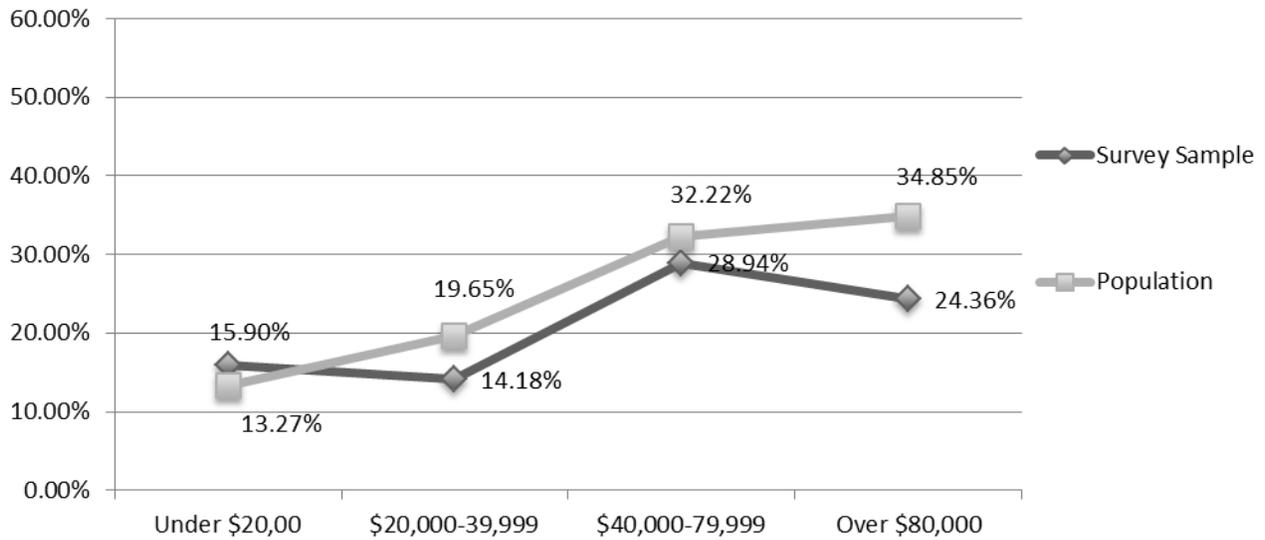
Finally, residents of Middlesex-London (18 years of age and older) reflect a relatively even distribution between males (48%, 179,895 males) and females (52%, 197,155 females). In contrast, survey respondents were predominantly female (79.14%); therefore, males are underrepresented in the survey respondents (18.86% of respondents). An overrepresentation of women in matters related to food system work is consistent with studies finding that women tend to be more involved in the food movement, particularly in the area of food justice.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Statistics Canada, "London Ontario CMA Profile," 2011, Web, <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMA&Code1=555&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&Data=Count&SearchText=london&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>.

<sup>23</sup> Psyche Williams-Forsen & Carole Counihan, Eds., *Taking Food Public: Redefining Foodways in a Changing World*, Routledge, 2011, Print, at p. 30; Janet Page-Reeves, *Women Redefining the Experience of Food Insecurity: Life Off the Edge of the Table*, 2014, Print, at p. 264.

**Figure 6: Household Income of Middlesex-London Residents 18 Years of Age and Older**



### Community Asset Mapping

The primary objective of this interactive and participatory session was to co-design a local food system asset map for Middlesex-London. In total, 42 community members participated in this session. They not only contributed to the process of grouping together food system assets identified in the region but also engaged in small group work to identify additional strengths and assets. With the strengths of the region identified and arranged, everyone contributed to the design of a large format asset map that connected the assets to areas of the local food system. This visualization exercise was followed by a reflection on and discussion about the Middlesex-London food system and what initiatives can build on its strengths and assets. The session ended with participants working together to identify action items that would leverage assets in the local food system.

### Community Action Planning

The community action planning session, which followed directly after the asset mapping session, saw 22 key community members and leaders come together to build upon the preceding session. The primary objective of this interactive and participatory session was to co-design and vote on start-up, mini work plans for transforming the Middlesex-London community food system. After identifying areas to cultivate the food system, participants voted on 6 priority areas and then worked together to identify initiatives in each area that leverage assets in the region. After voting on initiatives in each cultivation area, participants worked on a mini work plans for each of 4 initiatives. These work plans, all of which will form the starting point for community action planning in the future were presented to a mock food policy council.

### ***Report Writing***

The final phase of the community food assessment project involved the writing of this Middlesex-London Community Food Assessment Report. The report was submitted to the Middlesex-London Community Food Assessment Implementation Team and reviewed by several key members of the Steering Committee. Comments were gathered from the Committee members and revisions were made to the current document based on the feedback provided.