

**MIDDLESEX-LONDON BOARD OF HEALTH**

**REPORT NO. 83-24**

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Board of Health  
**FROM:** Dr. Alexander Summers, Medical Officer of Health  
Emily Williams, Chief Executive Officer  
**DATE:** 2024 December 12

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**MIDDLESEX LONDON FOOD POLICY COUNCIL RESTRUCTURING**

**Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the Board of Health receive Report No. 83-24 re: “Middlesex London Food Policy Council Restructuring” for information.*

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**Report Highlights**

- The Middlesex London Food Policy Council (MLFPC) has restructured, redefining the roles and responsibilities of its members.
- The role of the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) Registered Dietitian (RD) supporting the MLFPC will shift from primarily administrative duties to focussing on the delivery of public health interventions, including Community and Partner Mobilization and Healthy Public Policy Development.
- MLHU’s ongoing support of the MLFPC aligns with internal program priorities and demonstrates our commitment to this community collaboration.

**Background**

In 2014, the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) approved a new Food Systems Registered Dietitian (RD) position which including dedicated time to coordinate the [Middlesex-London Food Policy Council](#) (MLFPC, “the Council”). This new RD position was instrumental in ensuring all requirements to establish the MLFPC were enacted, including directing the first local Community Food Assessment (CFA). The MLHU RD also worked with a MLFPC implementation team of community representatives to recruit members, form committees, and develop terms of reference, a description of roles and responsibilities, and priorities for action. By 2016, the MLFPC was fully established.

The MLFPC includes members representing all aspects of the food system such as production, distribution, government, advocacy, and education. The Council provides cross-sector collaboration and addresses food-related challenges and opportunities to promote a healthy, safe, equitable, ecologically responsible, and economically viable food system.

As the MLFPC matured and evolved, it became challenging for Council members and community volunteers to fulfill its day-to-day operations. The MLFPC recently reviewed and

revised its structure to ensure its members' roles and responsibilities maximize their skills and capacity to benefit the work of the Council. The revised roles and responsibilities more effectively utilize the knowledge and skills of the MLHU RD to achieve activities aligned with MLHU interventions, with all administrative duties now assigned to a new Facilitator role within the Council.

### **Aligning support with MLHU intervention priorities**

Changing the way in which the MLHU RD supports the MLFPC contributes to the MLHU's Community and Partner Mobilization work by enhancing Council's ability to expand outreach and engage with new and potential partners, and coordinate efforts of Council members to respond to community need through collective impact.

The revised roles and responsibilities of MLFPC members also support the MLHU RD to contribute more fully to the MLHU's Healthy Public Policy work by focusing participation on the steps involved in healthy public policy development. The MLHU RD will have increased capacity to provide knowledgeable, and evidence-informed information to the Council, to support the creation of policies that are tailored to address specific food system issues. Through engagement of key partners, the MLHU RD will support the Council to ensure policies are inclusive and reflective of the needs and preferences of the population they aim to serve.

Providing greater capacity for collective impact and advocacy efforts will help raise awareness about food systems issues, mobilize public support, and build coalitions that are essential for driving policy changes. The MLHU RD will have greater capacity to support long-term strategic planning with the MLFPC. This can lead to the creation of policies that not only address immediate, local food systems concerns but also contribute to sustainable, long-term food system improvements for our community.

### **Next Steps**

To support the change in responsibilities and time commitment of the MLHU RD, the MLFPC worked with the London Food Bank to hire a Community Food Systems Facilitator. For the remainder of 2024, the MLHU RD will continue to support the new Facilitator role through this transition and will focus efforts exclusively on public health interventions starting January 2025.

This report was prepared by the Municipal and Community Health Promotion Team of the Family and Community Health Division.



**Alexander Summers, MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCPC**  
Medical Officer of Health



**Emily Williams, BScN, RN, MBA, CHE**  
Chief Executive Officer

**This report refers to the following principle(s) set out in Policy G-490, Appendix A:**

- The Foundational standard (Health Equity, Effective Public Health Practice) and Program standard (Chronic Disease and Wellbeing) as outlined in the [Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services and Accountability](#).
- The following goal or direction from the [Middlesex-London Health Unit's Strategic Plan](#):
  - Client and Community Confidence
  - Program Excellence
  - Organizational Excellence

**This topic has been reviewed to be in alignment with goals under the Middlesex-London Health Unit's [Anti-Black Racism Plan](#) and [Taking Action for Reconciliation](#), specifically recommendations Strengthening Community Capacity, Effective Collaboration (Anti-Black Racism Plan) and Supportive Environments (Taking Action for Reconciliation).**