Food Policy Update

Recommendation
That the report of the General Manager, Community Services Department, dated May 13, 2019 be forwarded to the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services for information.

Topic and Purpose
The purpose of this report is to provide an update regarding food policy in Saskatoon, specifically in response to a request from the Saskatoon Food Council received on October 3, 2017.

Report Highlights
1. Numerous discussions and research into food policy in Saskatoon have occurred over the last five years.
2. Key recommendations regarding food policy focuses on integrating food strategy goals into the City of Saskatoon’s Official Community Plan.
3. Policy has been drafted as part of the Official Community Plan Redesign project and is expected to be presented as part of the proposed new Official Community Plan.
4. Additional requests by the Saskatoon Food Council, for staff support and funding, would require further direction and resourcing approval from City Council.

Strategic Goals
The development of food policy supports the City’s Strategic Goal of Environmental Leadership by promoting food production in the city and decreasing the ecological footprint and environmental impacts of food production, consumption and transport. It also broadly contributes to Quality of Life through recreational opportunities, such as community and allotment gardens.

Background
At the November 6, 2017 meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities, and Corporate Services meeting, a request to speak from Gord Enns, Executive Director, Saskatoon Food Council, spoke to a letter dated September 1, 2017, from the Saskatoon Food Council, attaching materials in support of his presentation (see Attachment 1). In response to the presentation and letter, the Committee resolved:

“That the Administration report back on the requests from the Saskatoon Food Council on food systems.”
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Report
Food Policy Discussions and Research
Over the last five years, a number discussions have occurred surrounding food policy and a food strategy in Saskatoon. These discussions have resulted in wording, regarding food access, being included in a number of plans or strategies that have been endorsed by City Council. This includes the Strategic Plan 2013-2023, the Towards a Food Strategy for Saskatoon – Saskatoon Regional Food System Assessment and Action Plan, the Junction Improvement Strategy and the Westmount Local Area Plan.

The theme, of the recommendations and references, is that access to food and strategies to support the production and supply of food in Saskatoon are valued by the residents of Saskatoon and there is a desire for the City of Saskatoon (City) to support food strategy-related items in the City’s policies and programs. To assess the best means of addressing food access issues, the Planning and Development Division and Sustainability Division partnered with the University of Saskatchewan’s School of Public Health to co-supervise a project by a Masters of Public Health student. The project was a survey and study of food access policies and projects in cities across Canada. The resulting report, Food Policy Recommendations for the City, summarized best practices across Canada to support food access at the municipal level.

Food Policy Recommendations
The report provided an overview of best practices from across Canada and included a series of detailed recommendations based on these for the City (see Attachment 2). Key among these are the following four recommendations:

1) identify two to five main goals for the City of Saskatoon’s food system;
2) identify potential indicators, or measures of success for those goals;
3) determine policy priority areas; and
4) develop specific policies.

These four recommendations align with the recommendations from the Towards a Food Strategy for Saskatoon – Saskatoon Regional Food System Assessment and Action Plan:

“The City of Saskatoon (City) should integrate the food strategy goals into the Official Community Plan (OCP) and promote the food strategy as part of Saskatoon’s image and values”

The recommendations also align with the following endorsed directions from existing City initiatives:

1. Strategic Plan (2013-2023)
   a. Our Vision – Investment to Benefit All – “People have access to appropriate and affordable housing, basic services and healthy food.”
2. Strategic Plan (2018-2023)
   - Environmental Leadership – Saskatoon Grows in harmony with nature – “We grow more food in the city”.

3. Junction Improvement Plan
   - Junction – Recommendation 6.4: “That the Junction Public Amenity Program, CHEP Good Food Inc., and Community Development work to expand urban agriculture in The Junction, though initiatives such as community greenhouses, rooftop gardens, and raised planters. In addition, that Planning and Development create an implementation plan to review and integrate recommendations to improve food security and sustainability into broader policy documents (including the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw) once the Saskatoon Regional Food Assessment is complete.”

Proposed Policy Direction – Official Community Plan Re-design
Long Range Planning is currently leading an update and re-design of the City’s Official Community Plan (OCP). The intent of the project is to consolidate the various endorsed initiatives that have helped set a new vision for the City over the last ten years. This includes the Strategic Plan, the Plan for Growth, Saskatoon Speaks, and the outstanding food policy recommendations referenced above.

Draft wording has been prepared to reflect the endorsed directions listed above. It is currently under review and is expected to be brought forward as part of the proposed new Official Community Plan in late 2019. Attachment 3 includes the proposed wording and background information supporting it. If endorsed, inclusion of wording on food systems, like that shown in Attachment 3 would:

- Complete the recommendation for Planning and Development Division from the Food Strategy Implementation Report; and
- Provide a framework for any further initiatives undertaken by the City related to food access, including any of those requested by the Saskatoon Food Council.

Next Steps – Official Community Plan Policy
An internal review of proposed wording is currently underway and is expected to be complete by July 1, 2019. Following the internal review, proposed wording of any significant changes is expected to be presented to the public through a series of online engagements. The intent of the engagement is to validate the proposed wording and ensure it aligns with directions that have been endorsed by City Council.

Next Steps – Other Requests by Saskatoon Food Council
Additional requests by the Saskatoon Food Council, for staff support and funding would require further direction and resourcing approval from City Council. Currently the City provides supports directly and indirectly for food systems through Parks and Community Development for the community and allotment garden programs, through grants provided to CHEP Good Food Inc. and Saskatoon Food Bank for operations and a
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green gardening grant. Other than these, there are no other resources specifically allocated towards coordinating food security issues. The identified policies expected to be proposed as part of the Official Community Plan Redesign would provide a framework and direction for any work done regarding these issues.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement
The goals, objectives and policies proposed to be contained in the redesigned OCP were informed by utilizing existing input from public and internal engagements during the development of related City initiatives, such as those from Saskatoon Speaks, the Strategic Plan and the Growth Plan to Half a Million. In addition, this proposed wording aligns with the direction outlined in the Junction Improvement Plan and the Westmount Local Area Plan, both of which included significant public involvement.

Communication Plan
A communication and engagement plan is included within the work plan of the OCP Redesign project. This will include an internal and external communications strategy to inform and educate the users of the OCP on its content, as well as how its goals, objectives, and policies provide guidance for the City’s decisions, planning, and budgeting.

Other Considerations/Implications
There are no policy, financial, environmental, privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations at this time.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion
Further reports are expected to be brought forward regarding inclusion of food policy in the OCP as part of the Official Community Plan Redesign project in late 2019.

Public Notice
Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

Attachments
1. Saskatoon Food Council – Letter and Materials
2. Food Policy Recommendations for the City of Saskatoon – Summary of Recommendations
3. Official Community Plan Redesign – Draft Food Policy Wording

Report Approval
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