AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD STRATEGY

UPDATE AND REVIEW OF 2021 WORKPLAN ACTIONS AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

York Region Planning and Economic Development Staff

- Meena Hassanali, Agriculture and Agri-Food Business Specialist
- Jennifer Best, Senior Planner
- Tony Corkovic, Marketing & Communications Specialist

December 2, 2020



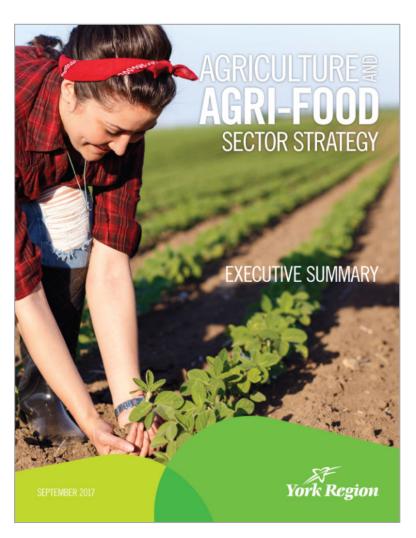
OVERVIEW

- Provide an update of Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy actions for 2020
 - Update on activities since last meeting
 - COVID-19 impacted activities
- Provide an overview of actions planned for 2021
 - Get your input and feedback
 - Inform the development of 2021 Workplan

STRATEGY CONTEXT

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

- Understand the economic impact of the agriculture and agri-food sector
- Recommend actions for the Region, local municipalities and stakeholders
- Support and grow York Region's agricultural and agri-food sector



www.York.ca/agrifood

FIVE STRATEGIC GOAL AREAS

- Strengthen communication and collaboration between York Region, local municipalities and stakeholders
 - 2 Support the agri-food sector through integrated land use planning and economic development
 - Support increased capacity for value added processing and support services
 - Leverage the Region's location within the Greater Toronto Area through direct farm marketing to meet demand for local food production
- 5 Provide support for business retention and expansion of primary agricultural production

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION IS ON TRACK

 40 out of 45 actions have either been planned, initiated, or completed

Year	Initiated/ Underway	Planned	New/not initiated	Completed	Total Action Items
2017	14	7	24	-	45
2019-2020	27	4	5	9	45

STRATEGY UPDATE: 2020 ACTIONS

SELLING FOOD TO ONTARIO — VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

- Targeted for early-stage food companies and primary producers
- 300 registrants; 168 attendees
- Recording on York Region YouTube Channel

SELLING FOOD TO ONTARIO

TRAINING WORKSHOP

November 5, 2020 8:45 A.M - 12:30 P.M









AGRI-FOOD FORUM 2020 — HURON COUNTY

Municipal Agriculture Economic Development and Planning Forum

- November 18 & 19, 2020
 - Growing a Better Future: Agri-food & Municipal Collaborations in the 2020's
 - York Region: Panel for Embracing the Agricultural Systems Approach
 - York Region announced as host for 2021



YORK REGION FOOD & BEVERAGE ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

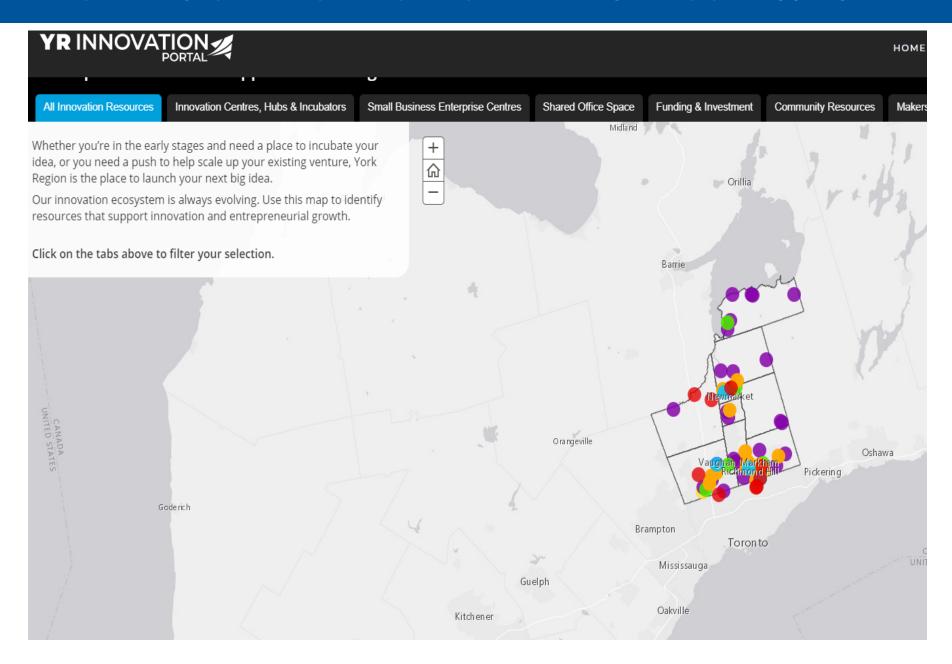
- Delivery partner: YSpace, York University
- Cohort #1: Launched in August 2020
 - 8 Companies
 - # Workshops/Fireside Chats: 18
 - Total Revenue: \$151,025
 - # New store presence: 198
 - # Jobs:14
- Oat Canada on Dragon's Den
- CEO of gotBALLZ named 1 in 10 BMO
 Women Business Grant recipient
- Development of Agri-food Innovation
 Network







YORK REGION INNOVATION PORTAL — AGRI-FOOD ASSETS



AGRI-FOOD SUB-GROUP OUTCOMES



Developed a PPE supplier directory



Enabled mobile COVID-19 testing at 17 farm locations throughout York Region

36

COVID-19 farm spot-check inspections completed by York Region Public Health



Completed a business recovery accelerator webinar series for food processors



Provided COVID-19 guidance and information for safe farm and food operations



Shared health and safety protocols and best industry practices between group members and industry stakeholders



Completed a temporary foreign worker campaign to raise awareness and support workers in the sector



Developed a COVID-19 health and safety webinar for farm operations

VIRTUAL CONSULTATION MEETING

- Agricultural System
 Consultation
 - October 21, 2020
 - 13 participants



Thank you for your input and Feedback

ALIGNING THE OFFICIAL PLAN TO PROVINCIAL DIRECTION

- Policy Writing of Chapter 6:
 - Briefing notes finalized for upcoming review with Chief Planner
 - Conformity of Provincial Plans incorporated
 - Inclusion of input from Advisory Committee, Local Municipalities, Economic Strategy, Environmental Services, Public Health and Community Planning and OMAFRA
 - Drafts of new policies
 - Existing non-agricultural uses
 - New non-agricultural uses
 - Specialty Crop Area
 - Edge planning
 - Agri-food Network
- In-depth Mapping Analysis





Draft Policies and Mapping due to Management December 18

AGRI-FOOD SPOTLIGHT SERIES









Hiveshare





Reesor's





INDUSTRY PUBLICATIONS AND PROMOTION

Successful teamwork

Third party service assists with market research and consumer insights. | 8

Blueberry production up north Breeders aim for a hardy cooler climate hybrid. | 12

Good year for fresh potatoes

oes



fruitandveggie.com





When challenges become opportunities

"Pivot" may be the most fashionable word of 2020, and it certainly applies to agri-food businesses that have rapidly adjusted to changing market conditions. Increased safety measures, new online shopping, touchless pickup services and virtual farm tours were among some of the earliest developments that farms introduced to minimize business disruptions. Growers based in York Region, Ont. shared some insights into which new processes have been the most successful, and which are expected to continue into the long term.

SEPARATING OPERATIONS

To maintain physical distancing and improve traffic flow, several businesses have created separate shopping experiences to service different customer segments.

Resorts has a farm, shop, commercial kitchen, and a retail store in Markham, Ont, and the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. Within the first weeks of closures in March, they quickly introduced online shopping and decided to take this a step further after its launch. The Resor's team identified that it would be safer for staff and customers if online orders were packed and picked up in a location separate from their physical stores. This would enhance safe physical distancing and minimize any inconventience for in-store customers. The team accelerated their

selection of grocery items including international specialties and even cleaning supplies. This was started to support foreign seasonal workers while on mandatory isolation and has expanded through the year following positive feedback from staff.

IMPROVING THE U-PICK EXPERIENCE

Consumer pick-your-own experiences offer meaningful connections to agriculture as well as popular family bonding opportunities. However, there are often massive crowds, especially on weekends during peak berry, apple and pumpkin seasons. York Region producers displayed innovation to meet these challenges head on.

Having successfully launched their online shop, Recsor's extended the web service to support their pick-your-own farm operations. An online reservation system was established before strawberry season and the booking service enabled guests to reserve one-hour picking slots before driving to the farm. With visitors evenly spread through each day, the pick-your-own experience was more relaxed than usual, despite COVID restrictions.

Robintide Farms, just north of Vaughan, Ont., were able to successfully manage crowds through the 2020 berry season without requiring online reservations, but they did implement new processes on site to keep visitors and saff safe. One of the

procedures they found particularly useful was having multiple check-in zones for visitors to be

Businesses created separate outlets to serve different customers.

commitment to the digital market segment by investing in a new off-site warehouse, where online orders are packed and prepared for pickup.

Top Tomato Foods are growers, packers and shippers that sell wholesale at the Ontario Food Terminal as well as direct to consumers from their popular 19th Avenue Market in Markham. This summer, the business identified that an easy way to minimize lineups and bottlenecks in the farm market would be to separate large order customers. Now those interested in volume purchases are directed into a separate area of the market.

A more significant investment by Top Tomato this year was their new online grocery store, specifically developed to support their staff of over 140 employees. This operation has its own internal website for online ordering and includes a wide

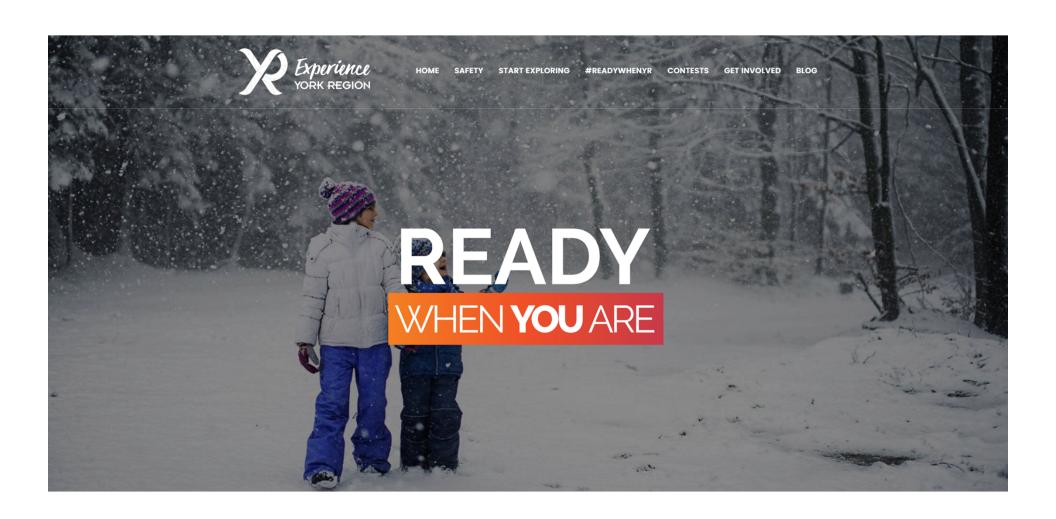
reminded of rules as they moved through the farm. Each checkpoint was staffed to maintain distancing and provide hand santitization. Overall, creating a safer environment enabled the business to cross promote additional products and services, and resulted in a more relaxed environment for staff and visitors.

To support businesses during COVID-19, York Region established an industry-led agri-food subgroup comprised of members of the Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee and other experts. The group helped enable mobile COVID-19 testing at farms, developed a business recovery webinar series and created a Personal Protective Equipment supplier directory for agri-food businesses.

To learn more about how York Region supports its agriculture and agri-food sector, visit york.ca/agrifood. •

30 FRUIT & VEGETABLE - November 2020

#READYWHENYR



AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD UPDATE

70+
events, webinars
and meetings held

350,000+ social media impressions

2.3% average engagement rate

3,800+ stakeholders engaged

7,300+

social media engagements (likes, comments, shares)

2,500+
visits to york.ca
agriculture/agri-food



York Farm Fresh distributed 60,000+ guide maps



supported first Food & Beverage
Accelerator Program with
York University

50+
partners engaged and collaborated

2021 WORKPLAN

YORK REGION AGRI-FOOD BUSINESSES IN HEADLINES

Holland Marsh farmers invent Plexiglass protection for workers during COVID-19



Bradley Van Luyk grows carrots, onions, parsnips and beets, in the Newmarket, Ont. area north of Toronto. also known as the Holland Marsh. One of Van Luvk's cousins started working for the farm after being laid off from his job at a glass company due to COVID-19.

"It was his idea that we do something with the Plexiglass," Van Luvk said.

The idea grew from there. Van Luyk, his cousin James leuhr Grima, his dad Doug Van Luyk, and other cousin Zach Van Luyk, all were involved and offered input as well. His dad designed a prototype, Van Luyk took care of welding and fabrication, and his cousins handled the glass work. The glass work involved drilling holes through the 1/2 inch Plexiglass, which was then bolted onto a steel frame similar to a window. The end result was a moveable Plexiglass protector that goes in between each seat on an onion transplanter.

They made seven glass protectors, one for each side of their six-seat Checchi e Magli onion transplantor. It took the team 50 to 60 hours to complete the project

and the design didn't require much tweaking, "IOn thel first try it worked " Van Luyk said.

The glass adds an extra layer of protection for workers planting using the onion transplanter where the recommended two-metre distancing rule would be hard to follow. Van Luyk talked about how there was some talk about having everyone wear masks, but then the glass protector idea took off.

The shields aren't permanently fixed onto the transplanter and move to allow workers in and out. "Between each guy it slips open so that they can get in and out of the machine nicely," Van Luyk explained. "On each divider with a Plexiglass, there's two u-bolts that bolt onto the transplantor, so it's very easy for the [Plexiglass protector] to come off."

"Let's say next year there's not this problem, it will take 15 minutes to take off," Van Luyk said, adding that he hopes that it's only for this year. "Our plan is to use it for this year but if the guys like it for windbreakers and all that stuff we'll keep it on there

Vaughan distillery gets approvals, donations from flour mill to make hand sanitizers

Last Straw Distillery planning to produce 1,000 litres a week

By Dina Al-Shibeeb Vaughan Citizen Friday, April 3, 2020



The Vaughan-based Last Straw Distillery is one of the latest businesses to transform its actual line of production to make much-needed hand sanitizers.





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HOME > COVID-19 LOCAL NEWS

Market Brewing delivers first batch of hand sanitizer to Southlake

Both fresh beer — delivered to your doorstep — and Bare Hands Sanitizer are on tap at the Newmarket brewery during the COVID-19

Apr 28, 2020 8:00 AM By: NewmarketToday Staff











STRATEGIC APPROACH — 2021 WORKPLAN

- Identify new projects to align the strategic areas
 - Preliminary overview with local municipalities and OMAFRA
- Continue on-going actions (initiated or underway)
- Continue to leverage partnerships in delivering actions
- Input and feedback will inform the development of 2021 Workplan

2021 WORKPLAN — NEW PROJECT IDEAS

#	2021 New Projects	Timelines
1	2021 Agri-Food Forum	Q3 2021
2	Farm and Food Tours (virtual or in-person) and videos to raise awareness of diversity of production and processing found in the Region	Q3 2021
3	Agri-food tech innovation – Competition (prize, pitch competition)	Q3 2021
4	Always in Season Toolkit Pilot in York Region – Ontario Federation of Agriculture and Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA)	Q2 2021
5	 Explore 2-3 education virtual workshops/webinars in topics such as: Opportunities to increase world crops within the Region Urban Agriculture/vertical farming Restaurant Pivot to consumer product goods (CPG) / Food-Start up companies 	On-going 2021
6	Fulsome Producers Directory working with industry associations	On-going 2021
7	COVID-19 Agri-Food Business Recovery • Project ideas from Agri-Food Sub Working Group	On-going 2021
8	2021 Official Plan Work Plan	On-going 2021

STRATEGIC GOAL#1: ON-GOING ACTIONS

Item #	Action Item	Timeline
1.2	Coordinated programming across the Region and local municipalities	On-going 2021
1.4 *New	Create directory/resource that includes names and contact information of producers in the Region Fulsome Directory working with industry associations	On-going 2021
1.5	Create annual opportunity to collect feedback from agri-food sector understand needs of farm /food businesses COVID-19 agri-food sub-group engaging local farmers and agri-food experts	On-going 2021
1.6 *New	Support/collaborate with Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance projects • Always in Season project with OFA and GHFFA	On-going 2021

STRATEGIC GOAL#1: ON-GOING ACTIONS

Item #	Action Item	Timeline
1.7	Continue support York Region Agriculture and Agri- Food Advisory Committee	On-going 2021
1.12 *New	 Support Agriculture and Agri-food related events: Host 2021 Municipal Agriculture Economic Development and Planning Forum in York Agri-food tech innovation – Competition (prize, pitch competition) 	October 2021

STRATEGIC GOAL#1: ON-GOING ACTIONS

Item #	Action Item	Timeline
1.10	 Execute Communications Plan; Develop agri-food education materials for public and industry: Local Food Promotion (YFF Map/APP) Agriculture and Agri-Food Newsletter Agri-food Spotlights: Video to promote agri-food assets Social Media – Canadian/Ontario local Ag days 	On-going 2021

STRATEGIC GOAL#2: ON-GOING ACTIONS

Item#	Action Item	Timeline
2.1	At next review, update York Region's Official Plan to conform and align with recent changes to the Greenbelt Plan, Growth Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan (2017 updates) • Work with lower tier municipalities as they review and update processes	On-going, Q4 2021
2.2	Prior to next Official Plan review, reexamine Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study and determine if updates are needed to reflect changes at the provincial level (agricultural system mapping)	On-going, Q4 2021
2.3	Through the Municipal Comprehensive Review, review York Region's Official Plan (and lower tier plans) agricultural and rural policies to ensure they encourage and support investment and employment in the agriculture sector • Draft Regional Official Plan to be released in 2021	On-going, 2021
*New	 2021 Official Plan Work Plan Internal Planning and Regional review and edits Policy Directions report for March External review and input Finalization of draft policies and mapping 	

STRATEGIC GOAL#3: MEDIUM /LONG TERM

Item#	Action Item	Timeline
3.2	Support agri-entrepreneur mentor program with York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre • Led by Clearwater Farm	On-going 2021
3.3	 Investigate Regional Food Incubator hub to support value added processing: Deliver York Region Food & Beverage Accelerator York University (Yspace) Cohort 1 (end in January) Cohort 2 (mid-May to September) Research / Mapping of Agri-Food Innovation Assets Continued support for agri-food innovation network and hubs 	December 2021

STRATEGIC GOAL#4: ON-GOING ACTIONS

Item #	Action Item	Timeline
4.1 & 4.2 *New	 Continued partnership with York Farm Fresh: Annual York Farm Fresh Guide Map York Farm Fresh App Translation of the map in 2-3 new languages Explore virtual tours / video clips 	On-going 2021
4.4	Promotional support of agri-tourism programming (Farm to Fork tours) and festivals Support for local business/ restaurants	On-going 2021
4.5 *New	Raise awareness around the diversity of production and processing found in the Region through promotional materials • Video for Agri-Food Forum	On-going 2021

STRATEGIC GOAL#4: ON-GOING ACTIONS

Item #	Action Item	Timeline
4.6	 Support York Region Food Council Led by York Region Food Council Community and Health Services (CHS) 	On-going 2021
4.80 *New	 Facilitate relationships between producer, processors and retail companies to support local food production York Farm Fresh webinar with Freshspoke and retailer connecting farming and early food start up community (B2B connections) 	Q4 2021
4.10 *New	 Explore partnership with Rouge National Urban Park Collaboration and learning among new entrants in the agri-food sector with agri-tourism opportunities (hikes, peer to peer learning) 	On-going 2021

STRATEGIC GOAL#5: ON-GOING ACTIONS

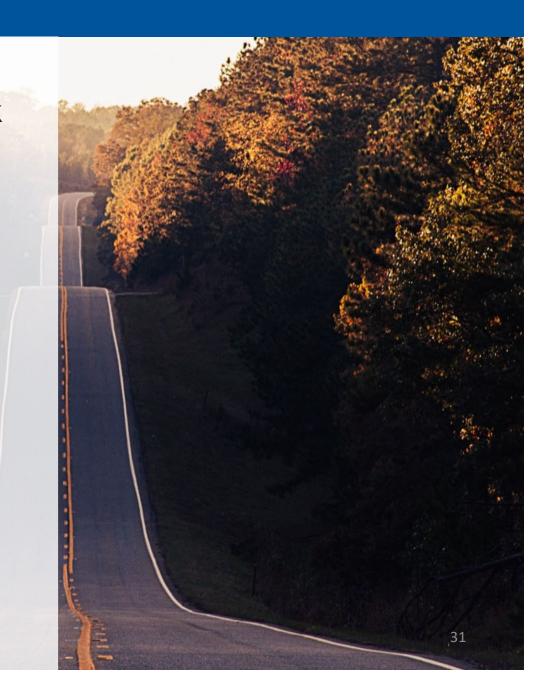
Item #	Action Item	Timeline
5.3 & 5.6	 Through COVID-19 Agri-food working group: Work with industry and government agencies to support employment of seasonal/foreign agricultural workers (accommodations etc.) Continue to support improving broadband connectivity across rural and agricultural areas 	On-going 2021
5.5 *New	Explore opportunities to increase the production of world crops within York Region	On-going 2020
5.7	Regional Council Annual Update Report and Presentation • Develop indicators and measures of success scorecard for the agri-food sector	June 2021

NEXT STEPS

 Gather input and feedback from committee

Finalize 2021 Workplan

 Finalize agreements with community partners



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

- *New: Project, education/learning activity being led by Agriculture and Agri-food Advisory Committee
 - Option: Host farm and food tours as part of Agri-Food Forum 2021
 - Education and learning activity at your farm / food venture
 - Option: Farm 911 The Emily Project
 - Signs for vacant farm properties
 - Suggested by Kim Empringham

QUESTIONS / INPUT AND FEEDBACK

Planning and Economic Development

Meena Hassanali, Agriculture and Agri-Food Business Specialist

Meena.hassanali@york.ca

Jennifer Best, Senior Planner

Jennifer.Best@york.ca

Tony Corkovic, Marketing and Communications Specialist

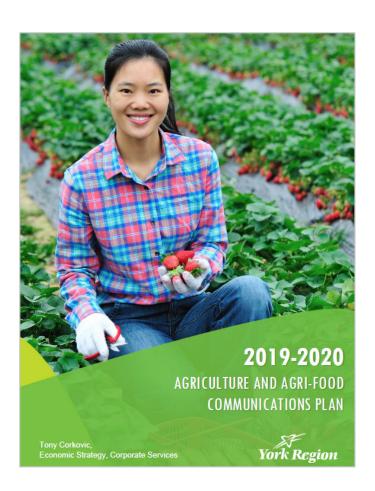
Tony.Corkovic@york.ca



STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION IS ON TRACK

Short-term items completed

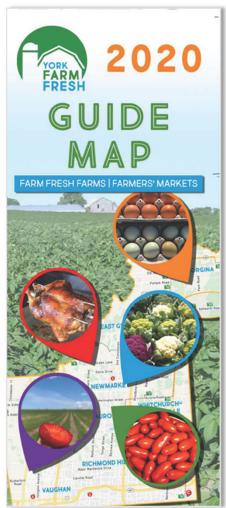
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Business Specialist
- Strategic communications plan
- Consultations on the Provincial Agricultural Systems review
- Revitalized York Farm Fresh and collaborated on the development of the annual York Farm Fresh Guide Map
- Review of policies and regulations related to environmental performance of food processing operations



LOCAL FOOD PARTNERSHIP

Leverage location within the GTA and proximity to customers through direct farm marketing and meet demand for local food production

- Continued partnership with York Farm Fresh
 - Annual York Farm Fresh Guide Map 2020
 - 52,000 maps printed and distributed
 - Good Food Promotion of key messaging
 - Five distinct self-guided routes
 - York Region Food Network partnership
- Members adapted business model in response to COVID-19
 - E-commerce Online Platforms
 - Curbside pick up
 - Public health guidelines securing PPE
 - Sharing best practices



YORK REGION AGRI-FOOD COVID-19 SUB-GROUP

- Continued dialogue
- October 23, 2020
- November 26, 2020



- INDUSTRY LEAD: Brett Wills Food Processing (Advisory Committee Member)
- Avia Eek, Chair of Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee
- Kim Empringham Vice-Chair, Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee
- Janice Bartley Food start-ups (Advisory Committee Member)
- Mark Bhim Longos (Advisory Committee Member)
- Carolyn Puterbough OMAFRA (Agriculture portfolio)
- Jody Mott, Holland Marsh Growers Association
- Aurelio Calabretta Vice-President, Smuckers
- Margo Begin, East Gwillimbury (N6 Representative)
- Fariba Niroui, Richmond Hill (through larger working group)
- James Rilett, Canadian Restaurant Association

2021 WORKPLAN — MUNICIPAL PROJECTS

- Georgina Taste of Georgina supports local restaurants...Feb 2021 (king of like winterlicous) fixed dining / form that they can fill out and to indicate their interest (Business Recovery item) https://www.georgina.ca/discover-georgina/taste-of-georgina
- Stouffville brand "powered by neighbours" campaigns
 - What's for Dinner, Skip the Apps,
 - Benefit Retailers for January
 - Community improvement plan to create grants first application, food security grant (local farmer) extra time...Regional money is gone. Seeking \$60K (recipient in Jan magazine)
 - Drone footage for tours -
- Shop King local business campaign
- Using the App called OnthisSpot virtual tour of different locations, highlights history of before and after spots....historic focus how to intrate that on Main street schomberg,
- Forum virtually added element, encourage ppl to come back....a tour you can do when you're at that location
- Food Security / Food waste project federal government announcement
- Urban Agriculture Project awareness in urban areas

2021 WORKPLAN — MUNICIPAL PROJECTS

- Town of Georgina Taste of Georgina to support local restaurants in COVID-19
 - Timing: February 2021
 - Online: https://www.georgina.ca/discover-georgina/taste-of-georgina
- Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville L4A.CA "powered by neighbours" campaigns
 - "What's for Dinner" and #skiptheapps
 - A new shop local brand and winter campaigns
 - Town-wide Community Improvement Plan: Food security grant (rural areas)
- Township of King: Shop King campaign supporting local business
 - Exploring App called OntheSpot virtual tour of different locations, highlights history of before and after spots....historic focus how to navigate on Main street Schomburg
 - Forum virtually added element, encourage ppl to come back....a tour you can do when you're at that location
- Interconnected...with local municipalities....shop local...or BIAs all of them will be represented on this campaign – York.ca
 - York.ca fulsome listing of all the listing sharing and complimenting

STRATEGIC APPROACH — 2021 WORKPLAN IDEAS

- Identify new projects to align the strategic areas
 - 1. 2021 Agri-Food Forum
 - 2. Farm and Food Tours (virtual or in-person) and videos to raise awareness of diversity of production and processing found in the Region
 - 3. Agri-food tech innovation Competition (prize, pitch competition)
 - 4. Always in Season Toolkit Pilot in York Region Ontario Federation of Agriculture and GHFFA
 - 5. Fulsome Producers Directory working with industry associations
 - 6. Explore 2-3 education workshops/webinars in topics such as:
 - Opportunities to increase world crops within the Region
 - Urban Agriculture/vertical farming
 - Restaurant Pivot to consumer product goods (CPG) / Food-Start up companies
 - 7. COVID-19 Agri-Food Business Recovery
 - Project ideas from Agri-Food Sub Working Group
 - 8. 2021 Official Plan Work Plan
- Continue on-going actions (initiated or underway)
- Continue to leverage partnerships in delivering actions

STRATEGIC GOAL#3:

Support increased capacity for value-added agri-food processing and support services

- Any Questions?
- Input and Feedback?

STRATEGIC GOAL#4:

Leverage location within the GTA and proximity to customers through direct farm marketing and meet demand for local food production

- Any Questions?
- Input and Feedback?

STRATEGIC GOAL AREAS

STRATEGIC GOAL #2: INTEGRATED LAND USE PLANNING

STRATEGIC GOAL #3:
VALUE ADDED PROCESSING & CAPACITY
BUILDING

STRATEGIC GOAL #4: LOCAL FOOD EDUCATION & PROMOTION

STRATEGIC GOAL #5: BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

STRATEGIC GOAL#1

Strengthen Communication and Collaboration with York Region, Local Municipalities and the Agri-Food Sector

- Any Questions?
- Input and Feedback?

STRATEGIC GOAL#5:

Provide support for business retention and expansion of primary agricultural production within York Region

- Any Questions?
- Input and Feedback?