

Food Waste and Insecurity Report

Recommendation

That the August 25, 2021, City of Edmonton Youth Council report EXT00696, be received for information.

Executive Summary

The City of Edmonton Youth Council presents their research and recommendations about the fight against food waste and food insecurity. The report aligns closely with the directions of the City Plan and some actions of Edmonton's Waste Reduction Roadmap '24. This includes climate resilience, supporting social equity, and reducing waste from the Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional sector.

Attachment 1 brings forward a youth perspective to help Edmonton achieve food justice—building a food system that respects food and people's right to access nutritious, affordable food. Food waste is a global and regional concern, with severe environmental and economic costs on our communities. Food insecurity is an escalating problem that uniquely affects youth. Often, charities will redirect food destined for waste to homes experiencing food insecurity. While these efforts have an indispensable impact, they alone cannot reverse the direction of growing food insecurity and waste. City of Edmonton Youth Council's eight recommendations support a multi-pronged approach to achieving food justice. They support both short-term and long-term solutions, and both community and government involvement.

Report

Status of Food Waste

Food waste hurts the environment. Canadian food waste produces 56.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions.

Food waste is expensive. Including irrigation, labour, and disposal, the total cost of it in Canada is over \$100 billion per annum.

Food waste is extensive. 58% of food is lost or wasted within Canada.

Status of Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is increasing. While Canada's population increased 1.11x from 2008 to 2018, food insecurity rose 1.29x, despite the work of food banks since 1981.¹

¹ <https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/>

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated both insecurity and the pressure on charities.

Food insecurity is substantial. In 2018, 12.5% of Canadian households experienced food insecurity, while 13.8% of Edmontonians experienced it.

Food insecurity uniquely affects children and youth's ability to achieve, play, and live healthy lives. 1 in 4 Canadian children went to bed or school hungry in 2018.

Report Methodology

The recommendations are based on:

- a) a study of existing food waste/food insecurity initiatives in Edmonton
- b) interviews from leaders of food waste/food insecurity organizations
- c) online research including websites of relevant Canadian initiatives, opinion pieces from food leaders, and literature review
- d) statistics from nationally or provincially funded researchers
- e) a survey of Edmontonian youth aged 13–23 years old

Summary of Recommendations

City of Edmonton Youth Council has 8 recommendations that target the Commercial Sector, Schools, Diversifying Food Options, and Community Organizations:

1. The City of Edmonton joins the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, an international agreement, as a commitment to meaningfully work towards developing quality food systems and achieving food justice.
2. The City of Edmonton pursues actions that educate and train businesses in donating/diverting excess food to local organizations.
 - a. While organizations already work to encourage donation of food, there gaps in knowledge about donation opportunities and the legal liabilities of gleaning food persist.
3. The City of Edmonton provides local businesses with resources and incentives to develop their individual food waste reduction plans.
 - a. Electronic technology companies can track businesses' food waste to provide solutions. Large corporations have incorporated them, while smaller businesses are not as financially capable or aware to implement these programs.
 - b. Alternatively, support businesses in doing their own waste audits to discover where waste is coming from, the associated cost, and solutions.

4. The City of Edmonton provides grants and similar incentives that encourage youth-led food waste initiatives.
5. The City of Edmonton works with the Edmonton School Board of Trustees to adopt the Food Matters Action Kit in classes, clubs, or any alternative programming.
 - a. The kit is an educational resource by the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation which empowers youth to enact change in food waste culture.
6. The City of Edmonton works with the Edmonton School Board of Trustees to determine the feasibility of building a pathway for food donation between restaurants and schools, where businesses can support initiatives such as free breakfast programs for students, etc.
7. The City of Edmonton investigates the feasibility of supporting Community Food Centres, Community Food Markets, and Community Fridges in Edmonton, while exploring supporting long-term strategies that further address the issues of food waste and food insecurity.
 - a. Community food centres combine food distribution with community involvement.
 - b. Community food markets provide fresh, affordable, and accessible food.
 - c. Community fridges are filled and used by community members so food flows anonymously to where it is needed in the neighbourhood.
8. The City of Edmonton develops a support strategy that meaningfully funds and addresses the needs of local nonprofits, for them to expand their reach and sustainably address food waste and food insecurity. The intended support for these models is short-term. Long-term systemic change is needed simultaneously.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s):			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)

Edmonton is an environmentally sustainable and resilient city. Edmontonians live in a way that meets the needs of the present and does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Edmonton is recognized as an environmentally sustainable city.	Reduced cost of food waste management/tonnes of food waste reduced	N/A	N/A
Support the elimination of poverty, its root causes and disparity in Edmonton's communities.	Rate of household food insecurity	N/A	N/A
From the City Plan, 5.3.1.6 Partner and strategize to reduce waste from the food system.	Reduced cost of food waste management/tonnes of food waste reduced	N/A	N/A
From the City Plan, 6.1.1.3 Partner with community, business and not for profit organizations to broaden Edmonton's collective community leadership and capacity	Number of people supported by funded initiatives	N/A	N/A

Attachments

1. Food Waste and Insecurity Report: A Youth Perspective