

# LET'S TALK FOOD



# LAMBTON

**Community Food Assessment**  
Asset and Gap Analysis 2014



## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

*Supporting sustainable livelihoods for local producers, expanding the local agriculture workforce, and promoting diversification in food production and related services.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture is a predominant industry in Lambton County and significant contributor to the local economy</li> <li>• Majority of Lambton County consists of "prime agricultural lands" as defined in the PPS - Canada Land Inventory class 1, 2, and 3 lands</li> <li>• Lambton is comprised predominately of family farms and very small businesses, with 85% of establishments owner-operated</li> <li>• The producing sector was identified as a key strength of the local food system by key informants (79%). This was attributed to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strong production assets (including large number of farms and production of high volume of quality raw materials and major commodities)</li> <li>○ Adoption of technology</li> <li>○ Strong infrastructure system for supplies and equipment</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Majority of land in Lambton is cash cropped               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 72% of farms are in the oilseed and grain farming industry</li> <li>○ Top 3 major field crops are soybeans, winter wheat, and corn for grain; accounted for 10.8%, 10.2%, and 5.6%, respectively, of the acres harvested in Ontario</li> <li>○ Major fruit crop is apples, making up 71% of land in fruit crops</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Key informants (79%) ranked Sustainable Agriculture/Farmers' Markets (encouraging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lambton farms are decreasing in number, but increasing in size</li> <li>• As farms grow in size, operators rely more on support services (e.g. agriculture consultants and specialists)</li> <li>• Number of Lambton crop production industry businesses increased from 2008 to 2012, but related employment decreased almost 5% in 2012</li> <li>• Lambton animal production industry businesses and employment decreased from 2008 to 2012</li> <li>• Rising cost of farmland:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Average value of Ontario farmland increased 60.3% from 2011 to 2013.</li> <li>○ Identified as challenge by key informants</li> <li>○ Large amount of capital needed to purchase farms and quotas creates barrier to young farmers entering industry</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Net farm income:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ontario farm operators spent an average of \$0.84 for every \$1.00 of receipts in 2010</li> <li>○ In 2005, Canadian farms with less than \$25,000 in receipts had a negative net income; 28% of Lambton farms reported less than \$25,000 total gross farm receipts in 2011</li> <li>○ 47.8% of Ontario farm operators had an off-farm job/business in 2010</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lambton farm operators are getting older and decreasing in number; few young people are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage creation of new farm units when both severed and retained parcels are viable farms, having regard for Provincial Policy<sup>†</sup></li> <li>• Support existing senior government programs that provide an adequate and stable income for farmers and improve economic viability of the farming industry<sup>†</sup></li> <li>• Enhance preservation and recognition of the importance and need for agricultural lands and resources<sup>†</sup></li> <li>• Develop land use policies and additional strategies to preserve and protect agricultural land and potential food production locations</li> <li>• Slow the decline in farm operators by creating policies that promote:<sup>†</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Forms of agriculture that require fewer acres to support a family (e.g. greenhouses, horticulture, livestock or other labour-intensive farming)</li> <li>○ Forms of agriculture that support multiple families</li> <li>○ Non-farm employment in rural areas that allow farmers to diversify income while continuing farm operations</li> <li>○ Identification and exploitation of non-traditional, non-local and niche markets and agri-tourism</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Encourage interested people, especially young people, to be trained in food production               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lambton College and local secondary schools are valuable resources for recruiting youth to the workforce through</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>†</sup> County of Lambton Official Plan

<sup>†</sup> County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 4

## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

*Supporting sustainable livelihoods for local producers, expanding the local agriculture workforce, and promoting diversification in food production and related services.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<p>sustainable agricultural practices and sale of local food through direct to consumer farmers' markets) as high priority for improving access to healthy food in Lambton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable agriculture is supported by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ County of Lambton Official Plan</li> <li>○ County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Reports</li> <li>○ County of Lambton Cultural Plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>taking up farming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identified as challenge by key informants</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce-related challenges, as identified by local agriculture industry stakeholders during interviews conducted by Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Greater demand than supply for general and skilled farming positions</li> <li>○ Training unconventional farmers who didn't grow up on a farm</li> <li>○ Changing skills sets required to stay up to date with technological advancements in the agriculture industry</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lack of seasonal labourers</li> <li>• Lack of specialty equipment</li> <li>• Majority of land in Lambton is cash cropped; vegetable and fruit crops make up only 0.5% of land in crops               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Amount of Lambton land in vegetable and fruit crops decreased 17% from 2006 to 2011</li> <li>○ In spite of small amount of vegetable and fruit crops, some key informants noted a strong supply of locally produced vegetables, fruit and meat</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Little provincial government support for agriculture, since no rural areas have a Liberal Party of Canada MPP</li> </ul>	<p>internships, co-op, and part-time opportunities*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use farmland and related resources in a sustainable manner, with emphasis on increased productivity and diversity of products and services<sup>†</sup></li> <li>• Promote value-added and home industries as a way to diversify and supplement farm incomes<sup>‡</sup></li> <li>• Develop secondary and tertiary opportunities in agriculture, including specialized crops, crop research, greener production techniques, opportunities in bio-fuels and other agri-food technology<sup>§</sup></li> <li>• Work with federal and provincial agriculture departments to identify and support new market segments and opportunities, including manufacturing and packaging<sup>§</sup></li> <li>• Provide education regarding what we are truly capable of producing and supporting in Lambton, and our context in the larger food system</li> </ul>

\* County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 9

† County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 5

‡ County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 4

§ Building a Creative Economy: A Cultural Plan for Lambton County

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## URBAN AGRICULTURE

*Promoting conversion of underutilized private and public green spaces to food growing areas, building sustainability for urban agriculture, and supporting development of skills related to small-scale food production.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority of key informants ranked Community Gardening/Urban Agriculture as medium (57%) or high (21%) priority for improving access to healthy food in Lambton</li> <li>• Majority of community survey respondents (64%) felt more community gardens in places like schools, churches, businesses, municipal lands and/or healthcare facilities are of high importance in making it easier to access healthy food in Lambton</li> <li>• Half of survey respondents grow their own food in a garden. Reasons included:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Freshness/taste (77%)</li> <li>○ Like to garden/hobby (70%)</li> <li>○ To feed myself and my family (49%)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Key informants stated gardening plays an important role in:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Promoting agriculture</li> <li>○ Appreciating where our food comes from</li> <li>○ Promoting healthy eating</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Community gardens exist in Lambton (8)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide garden experience, education, food production</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Communal gardens exist in Lambton (7)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Free to participate</li> <li>○ Everyone shares in gardening and harvest</li> <li>○ Portion of harvest donated to families and/organizations to increase access to fresh, local food</li> <li>○ Decreases time, cost and knowledge barriers to gardening</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Community and urban agriculture and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full assessment of urban agriculture in Lambton difficult because there is no overarching organization and data about all existing initiatives not readily available</li> <li>• Survey respondents who grow their own food increased with age, but youngest age groups were most likely to indicate they would like to</li> <li>• Survey respondents with household income below \$30,000 were least likely to grow their own food, but most likely to indicate they would like to</li> <li>• Some key informants noted community gardens are only successful if there is consumer interest and involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and support community and urban agriculture and community gardens</li> <li>• Create legislation in official plans and zoning bylaws that enables small-scale farmers and community/individual gardeners to grow food in a variety of uncommon locations, like backyards, schoolyards, church properties, and underutilized public open spaces and parks (CG1)</li> <li>• Develop location-specific policies to allow and encourage community gardens/urban agriculture and other small-scale agricultural initiatives in neighbourhoods underserved by traditional food retailers (CG2)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Possible locations could include schools, churches, businesses, municipal lands and/or health care facilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Identify opportunities throughout Lambton for growing food in unconventional locations (e.g. underutilized institutional lands, municipal parks) (CG8)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Led by community organizations (e.g. parks and recreation departments, schools, community gardeners, institutions involved in local food)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Enhance support for community gardening:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure public land (e.g. parks/open space) used for community gardening is protected from immediate or unnecessary development (CG3)</li> <li>○ Create gardening by-laws that allow for construction of fences, trellises, cold frames and hoopouses (e.g., to extend</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## URBAN AGRICULTURE

*Promoting conversion of underutilized private and public green spaces to food growing areas, building sustainability for urban agriculture, and supporting development of skills related to small-scale food production.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<p>community gardens are supported by <i>County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 14</i></p>		<p>growing season) on garden sites (CG4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Provide infrastructure (including water, compost, tilling / soil testing services, raised beds, rain barrels, top soil and compost) for community gardens by leveraging support from the local municipality (CG5)</li><li>● Review and/or develop bylaws that address chickens, rabbits and similar small livestock in urban areas (CG6)</li></ul>

## FOOD PROCESSING

*Creating/expanding local food processing infrastructure, such as creation of a local food hub.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ontario has the third largest food processing sector in North America, and is expected to grow</li> <li>• Almost 25% of Ontario food manufacturing businesses are based in rural areas</li> <li>• Advantages for food processing in Lambton, identified by Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Location on Southern Ontario/Michigan border</li> <li>○ Transportation infrastructure - road, rail, air, water</li> <li>○ Abundant agricultural land with commodity and niche crop availability</li> <li>○ Industrial infrastructure</li> <li>○ Quality of workforce with processing education</li> <li>○ Excellent selection of private and municipal industrial parks</li> <li>○ Situated on multi-modal transportation routes, including Great Lakes deep water port, commercial border crossing, and Highway 402</li> <li>○ Existing facilities with potential to retrofit for food processing uses</li> <li>○ Highly supportive community with vision and purpose</li> <li>○ Location of Lambton College and Western-Sarnia-Lambton Research Park (Western University)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little information about food processing in Lambton is available, including no full inventory of Lambton food processors, what is processed locally and where locally grown input is processed</li> <li>• Number of Lambton establishments involved in food processing decreased 43% from 2002 to 2013               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 30 establishments in 2002</li> <li>○ 28 establishments in 2008</li> <li>○ 17 establishments in 2013</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Key informants primarily identified challenges in the processing and distributing sectors. Specific concerns related to local food processing included:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Raw product is shipped out of Lambton for processing due to lack of local processing facilities</li> <li>○ Cost and local availability of food processing infrastructure, including facilities and equipment</li> <li>○ Getting involved in food processing is considered a risk because a huge investment is required with no guaranteed return</li> <li>○ Excessive government regulations impede establishment of local food processing</li> <li>○ Lack of year-round production of raw materials to supply a facility</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate possibility of establishing a local food processing facility to utilize locally grown product</li> <li>• Develop secondary and tertiary opportunities in agriculture, including product refinement and shipping and logistics centres*</li> <li>• Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership food processing development initiative underway to attract food processors to the area, focusing on export-oriented processors</li> <li>• Support the creation of food hubs and other value-added food production facilities (SA4)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Southwest Economic Alliance/Centre for Sustainable Food Systems willing to assist in development of a food cluster in Lambton – already underway in St. Thomas</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Promote value-added and food processing facilities on farm operations (or facilitate location in a nearby settlement or centre if not feasible)<sup>†‡</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Allow farmers to seize some of the profit share of the “middle man” or produce value from what would otherwise be a waste product</li> <li>○ County of Lambton Agricultural Advisory Committee recommended planning regulations have flexibility that allows value added enterprises that flow directly from the agricultural products of that</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

\* Building a Creative Economy: A Cultural Plan for Lambton County

† County of Lambton Official Plan

‡ County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 4

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## FOOD PROCESSING

*Creating/expanding local food processing infrastructure, such as creation of a local food hub.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Partnership and value-chain opportunities with bioindustrial sector</li> <li>○ Location of Canada's Bioindustrial Innovation Centre</li> <li>● Value-added food production facilities (including food hubs) encourage sustainable agricultural practices and local sale of goods through direct-to-consumer farmers' markets</li> <li>● Food processing in Lambton is supported by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ County of Lambton Official Plan</li> <li>○ County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Reports</li> <li>○ County of Lambton Cultural Plan</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Key informants supported investigating possibility of establishing food processing facility in Lambton to utilize local product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One key informant involved in producing stated there is a lack of connection among produces because they are in competition with one another</li> </ul>	<p>operation and to some extent the local agricultural area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Investigate avenues for providing financial support for associated costs and reducing regulatory barriers</li> </ul>

## FOOD DISTRIBUTION

*Creating/expanding local food distribution infrastructure, such as creation of a local food hub.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key informants supported development of cooperatives that would own storage and distribution infrastructure</li> <li>• Key informants supported reducing inefficiencies in current distribution systems that could utilize local products</li> <li>• Key informants supported establishing a local food distribution centre in Lambton, such as a food hub</li> <li>• Majority of community survey respondents (68%) felt creating a local food hub to sell local food and offer programs to teach people how to grow and cook food is of high importance in making it easier to access healthy food in Lambton</li> <li>• Value-added food production facilities (including food hubs) encourage sustainable agricultural practices and local sale of goods through direct-to-consumer farmers' markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No full inventory of food distributors and channels in Lambton County exists.</li> <li>• Key informants primarily identified challenges in the processing and distributing sectors. Specific concerns related to food distribution included:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Few opportunities for restaurants, institutions, etc. to buy wholesale direct from producers; must go to each producer individually</li> <li>○ High risk for producers to individually distribute product to local retailers</li> <li>○ No alternative exists for local producers to coordinate and centrally distribute their products in Lambton</li> </ul> </li> <li>• One key informant involved in producing stated there is a lack of connection among producers because they are in competition with one another</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop secondary and tertiary opportunities in agriculture, including product refinement and shipping and logistics centres*</li> <li>• Maximize partnerships between local growers, businesses and institutions</li> <li>• Develop a rapport with existing distributors and retailers and identify approaches that may be mutually beneficial</li> <li>• Support the creation of food hubs and other value-added food production facilities or local food distribution centres (SA4)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Southwest Economic Alliance/Centre for Sustainable Food Systems willing to assist in development of a food cluster in Lambton – already underway in St. Thomas</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop cooperatives that would own storage and distribution infrastructure               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ May encourage connection among producers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Evaluate methods to reduce inefficiencies in current distribution systems that could utilize local products</li> </ul>

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## ACCESS TO FOOD PRODUCED IN LAMBTON

*Creating demand for local food; promoting local food and associated retailers; and increasing availability of local food in institutions, workplaces, and other public facilities.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<b>Support and Demand for Local Food</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of survey respondents (66%) felt it was important or very important to buy food grown or produced in Lambton               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Only 6.5% of respondents felt it was not important</li> <li>○ % of survey respondents reporting that it was important or very important to buy food grown or produced in Lambton was lowest among those 30-39 years old and increased with age to a high of 74% among those 60 years and older</li> <li>○ % of survey respondents reporting that locally grown food was important when buying groceries was lowest among those 30-39 years old and then increased with age</li> </ul> </li> <li>• About 32% of survey respondents bought food from a local source at least weekly during growing season               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Only about 5% of respondents did not buy food from a local source</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Key informants felt there is high consumer demand for local food</li> <li>• To combat external competition, towns and villages in the County are starting to promote growth and development in niche markets to support local businesses and ensure economic gains are returned to local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No consensus on definition of "local food"</li> <li>• Survey respondents living outside of Sarnia/Point Edward were more likely to select locally grown as an important factor when buying groceries than those in the city</li> <li>• Factors preventing survey respondents from buying food from a local source included:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The need for more/better of locations of local food sources (31%) and their hours (29%)</li> <li>○ Lower or more competitive prices (11%)</li> <li>○ Limited awareness/advertising (10%)</li> <li>○ Limited availability of local food in grocery stores (10%)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Limited services in the County (not including Sarnia) results in exterior competition from nearby areas (e.g. U.S.) that have more goods and services drawing County residents away from local areas               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Spending outside the County represents a threat to the economic stability of the area, and increases the risk of survival for local businesses</li> <li>○ About 2/3 of survey respondents report buying groceries outside of Lambton                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 47% of respondents report buying groceries in the U.S., 24% in Middlesex-London and 7% in Chatham-Kent</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote value of supporting local producers</li> <li>• Educate public about why food may cost more from a local source</li> <li>• Continue to support promote growth and development in niche markets<sup>5</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Niche markets are successful if they offer a service that is in demand, unique and has a returning supportive consumer base</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 5  
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## ACCESS TO FOOD PRODUCED IN LAMBTON

*Creating demand for local food; promoting local food and associated retailers; and increasing availability of local food in institutions, workplaces, and other public facilities.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 32% buy groceries outside of Lambton at least once a month; 6% make one or more trips per week</li> <li>○ Main reasons for shopping outside Lambton:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lower prices</li> <li>▪ Better variety and selection</li> <li>▪ Middlesex-London shoppers often go to Costco for bulk items</li> <li>▪ People who shop in Chatham-Kent often do so because it's closer to home or work</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Awareness of Local Food</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locally Lambton Food and Fun from the Farm map identifies some local food retailers in Lambton</li> <li>• 10% of survey respondents stated increased awareness and advertising of local food sources would make it easier to buy food from them</li> <li>• A number of events involving food occur annually in Lambton County, where local food could be and often is featured</li> <li>• Promoting local food in Lambton is supported by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Key informants</li> <li>○ County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Reports</li> <li>○ County of Lambton Cultural Plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key informants stated there is a lack of awareness of current local food retailers, including farmers' markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand local food, including a logo, slogan, and marketing campaign to educate consumers</li> <li>• Promote the locations where local food is sold, including farmers' markets, local agriculture goods and farms, farm stands and produce sales.</li> <li>• Develop a "Savour Lambton County" promotion to salute local food suppliers and attract tourists<sup>†</sup></li> <li>• Routinely add local food to municipal events and acknowledge the suppliers<sup>†</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>\*</sup> County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 14

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Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<b>Local Food Access Points</b>		
<b>Farmers' Markets and other Local Food Retailers</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key informants want a food system where consumers can easily access and consume local food</li> <li>• Lambton has farmers' markets, roadside stands, farm stores, u-pick operations, and food box programs (including CSAs)</li> <li>• 5 farmers' markets in Lambton County               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Key informants (79%) ranked Sustainable Agriculture/Farmers' Markets (encouraging sustainable agricultural practices and sale of local food through direct to consumer farmers' markets) as high priority for improving access to healthy food in Lambton</li> <li>○ Key informants felt farmers' markets are a good way to respond to high consumer demand for local food while providing access to healthy food choices</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 75% of community survey respondents felt establishing mobile farmers' markets in neighbourhoods without grocery stores or other healthy food retailers is of high importance in making it easier to access healthy food in Lambton County</li> <li>• Promoting farmers' markets in Lambton is</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full inventory of local food retailers not available</li> <li>• Key informants identified the following challenges to local food access points:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ producers must adapt to meet continually changing consumer demands and buying habits</li> <li>○ traveling to rural areas to buy local food not always priority for urban customers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Survey respondents (31%) stated it would be easier to buy food from local food sources if they had better/more locations and hours</li> <li>• Challenges related to farmers' markets:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Key informants felt a farmers' market must be wanted by the community and well promoted to be successful</li> <li>○ Difficulty accessing existing farmers' markets was a key concern of survey respondents</li> <li>○ Key informants felt there is a perception that farmers' markets are expensive</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct surveys and record sales trends to identify local consumer buying habits</li> <li>• Increase awareness and advertising of existing local food sources, including promotion of farmers' markets<sup>†</sup></li> <li>• Create better/more locations and hours (including year round access) for local food sources, making it easier for the public to access them               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Establish micro farmers' markets in small urban centres close to businesses</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide transportation to local food sources</li> <li>• Create local food policies that support farmers' markets and farm-gate sales and tours<sup>‡</sup></li> <li>• Encourage municipalities to include provisions in their official plans to facilitate establishment of farmers' markets<sup>§</sup></li> <li>• Create policies that facilitate formation of farmers' markets in urban neighbourhoods and urban settlement areas (especially those without grocery stores) (SA1)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ see Petrolia policy as a model, recognizing vibrant markets elsewhere in Lambton</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>\*</sup> County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 14

<sup>†</sup> Building a Creative Economy: A Cultural Plan for Lambton County

<sup>‡</sup> County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 9

<sup>§</sup> County of Lambton Official Plan

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*Creating demand for local food; promoting local food and associated retailers; and increasing availability of local food in institutions, workplaces, and other public facilities.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<p>supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ County of Lambton Official Plan</li> <li>○ County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Reports</li> <li>○ County of Lambton Cultural Plan</li> </ul> <p><b>Grocery Stores, Restaurants and Municipal Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There are 30 grocery stores, 124 convenience/variety stores, 88 food take out/food court vendors and 254 restaurants in Lambton</li> <li>● Key informants want a food system where consumers can easily access and consume local food</li> <li>● Almost all (96%) of survey respondents buy most of their groceries at a grocery store</li> <li>● Key informants felt getting local food into retailers is important – majority of the population buy food from major retailers, not local sources               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 10% of survey respondents stated increased availability of local foods in grocery stores would make it easier to buy local food</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Survey respondents ranked small food retailers partnering with local growers to sell local healthy food as the top initiative to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of local food in grocery stores and restaurants were key concerns of survey participants</li> <li>● Key informants identified food retailing as an area of high concern in Lambton's food system and identified the following issues:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Difficult for individual local producers to get their product on the shelves of major supermarket chains (i.e. Loblaws, Sobeys, and Metro) or compete with large retailers</li> <li>○ Company policies and strict government regulations make getting local products into supermarkets difficult</li> <li>○ Some retailers do sell local produce, but it is priced to align with the price of products from the retail warehouse</li> <li>○ Producers need more retailing opportunities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work cooperatively to identify opportunities to establish seasonal and mobile farmers' markets in unconventional locations, such as underutilized institutional lands and/or parking lots, especially in communities without grocery stores or other healthy food retailers (SA2)</li> <li>● Promote food access programs that utilize local food, such as Community Supported Agriculture and the Garden Fresh Box, to improve access to healthy food</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a rapport between producers and existing retailers and identify approaches that might be mutually beneficial</li> <li>● Develop policies to improve methods to source foods from farms or urban agricultural operations using practices of sustainable agriculture (including but limited to those that conserve the natural environment, protect surface and groundwater quality and minimize impacts on other land uses (SA3)</li> <li>● Support incentive programs (such as New York's Healthy Bodega Initiative or Philadelphia's Fresh Food Financing Initiative) for existing small food retailers to carry more healthy foods and/or to partner with local growers, farmers' markets, local food programs, or community supported agriculture operations (R2)</li> <li>● Develop linkages between local producers and local restaurants, including the creation of</li> </ul>

## ACCESS TO FOOD PRODUCED IN LAMBTON

*Creating demand for local food; promoting local food and associated retailers; and increasing availability of local food in institutions, workplaces, and other public facilities.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<p>improve access healthy food in Lambton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Survey respondents supported offering incentives for stores to stock local food, in order to increase the amount of local food available in grocery stores or restaurants</li> <li>● Encouraging locally grown food in local restaurants supports a sustainable food system and promotes buying local</li> <li>● Accessing local food at Lambton retailers is supported by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ County of Lambton Official Plan</li> <li>○ County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Reports</li> <li>○ County of Lambton Cultural Plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<p>local food policies to promote these links<sup>*</sup>,<sup>†</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Encourage local restaurant owners to feature and promote local produce, meat, poultry, fish and other products from the region<sup>*</sup></li> <li>● Routinely add local food to municipal events and acknowledge the suppliers<sup>*</sup></li> <li>● Review products sold at municipal facilities and snack booths<sup>*</sup></li> <li>● Institutions (including schools, hospitals and nursing homes) to create policies in support of the purchase of healthy local food (I2)</li> <li>● Explore whether forming a food co-op or food hub could increase the amount of local food available in grocery stores or restaurants</li> </ul>

<sup>\*</sup> Building a Creative Economy: A Cultural Plan for Lambton County

<sup>†</sup> County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 9

Let's Talk Food Lambton Community Food Assessment

Asset and Gap Analysis 2014

## ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

*Creating access to healthy food in all communities; supporting programs that make healthy food more available and affordable; increasing availability of healthy food in institutions, workplaces, and other public facilities; and improving household food security.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<b>Food Deserts and Food Swamps</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% of survey respondents identified access to healthy food as their most important concern about food in Lambton</li> <li>• There are 30 grocery stores, 124 convenience/variety stores, 88 food take out/food court vendors and 254 restaurants in Lambton</li> <li>• Most survey respondents (96%) buy the majority of their groceries at a grocery store. Most common reasons include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Variety and selection</li> <li>○ Low prices</li> <li>○ Convenience</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Overall, the most distressed populations in Lambton live closest (on average) to grocery stores</li> <li>• Nearly 80% of survey respondents buy groceries at least once a week</li> <li>• Top three factors most important to survey respondents when buying groceries:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Price</li> <li>○ Freshness</li> <li>○ Healthy food</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Number of survey respondents who reported convenience was one of the most important</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey respondents identified concerns about lack of access to healthy food in low income communities and rural areas</li> <li>• Potential food deserts exist in Lambton:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ GIS mapping showed access to healthy food is difficult in southwestern Sarnia</li> <li>○ GIS mapping showed access to healthy food is difficult in many sparsely populated areas of Lambton County, where grocery stores can be accessed only by automobile                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Residents of rural area municipalities with the poorest access to grocery stores live in Brooke-Alvinston, Dawn-Euphemia and St. Clair</li> <li>▪ People who live in rural population centres have good access to one grocery store, but many would need to travel far to access another grocer</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Living in an area where healthy food is more available does not mean residents have time, knowledge or inclination to make healthy food choices (see “Food Knowledge and Skills”)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Neighbourhood food environments exist along with many other factors that</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target food deserts and food swamps as priority areas when establishing policies and interventions to improve access to healthy food</li> <li>• Assist small rural communities in developing proactive and creative strategies to maintain a profitable economic environment for retailers of healthy food</li> <li>• In neighbourhoods where grocery stores may not be feasible, establish programs to encourage community gardening, healthy corner stores, mobile markets and other alternative forms of food access               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ May require changes to by-laws to allow for small-scale agricultural land uses</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In neighbourhoods where access to healthy food is limited:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support retailers to carry healthy foods</li> <li>○ Provide incentives that support transportation programs (such as shuttles) to stores outside these neighbourhoods</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Establish policies to limit extent of food swamps, including by-laws that limit accessibility and advertising of unhealthy</li> </ul>

## ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

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Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<p>factors when buying groceries decreased with age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most (81%) of Lambton residents purchase food from a restaurant at least once a week</li> <li>• Survey respondents suggested that a mobile market open to everyone would help bring healthy food to rural areas without grocery stores</li> <li>• Survey respondents felt establishing a grocery store in downtown Sarnia would improve access to healthy food</li> <li>• County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 14 supports:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Creation of “complete communities” (areas where services and amenities are close enough to residential and commercial development that vehicle use is limited and individuals can take care of their daily needs in their local neighbourhood)</li> <li>○ Access to healthy and affordable foods in communities</li> <li>○ Limiting number of “fast food” and “junk food” establishments that locate near schools, parks, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>influence our diet such as our personal behaviours, cultural norms, time constraints and psychological barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential food swamps exist in Lambton, where an abundance of unhealthy food sources are easily accessible:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Virtually everywhere in the urban areas of Sarnia and Point Edward</li> <li>○ Some areas of Lambton County might be considered food swamps; tend to be located in population centres such as Petrolia, Wyoming, Forest, or Watford</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In Lambton it is easier to access unhealthy food sources (like fast food and variety stores) than healthy food sources (like grocery stores and local food outlets)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Although many rural households are located more than 10 kilometres from a grocery store, most population centres (even small crossroads) are within just a few kilometres of a variety store</li> <li>○ Fast food restaurants are prevalent in urban areas of the County and at high traffic rural crossroads, where grocery stores are not available within walking distance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>food, particularly around schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a maximum allowable density for fast food and/or junk food outlets within communities, especially near schools (R3)<sup>*</sup></li> <li>• Refer to opportunities listed under:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Healthy Food at Retailers”</li> <li>○ “Housing Development”</li> <li>○ “Transportation”</li> <li>○ “Healthy Food in Institutions”</li> <li>○ “Unhealthy Food Near Schools”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>\*</sup> County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 14  
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## ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

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Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<p><b>Healthy Food at Retailers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey respondents ranked small food retailers partnering with local growers to sell local healthy food as the top initiative to improve access healthy food in Lambton</li> <li>• Majority of survey respondents (70%) felt giving food retailers incentives to sell healthy food in neighbourhoods where healthy food is not currently available is of high importance in making it easier to access healthy food in Lambton               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Survey respondents and a key informant suggested offering healthier choices at convenience stores as a strategy to improve access to healthy food</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 50% of key informants ranked Food Retailers (evaluating the current food retailing system and determine how best to arrange future development to ensure access to food and encourage healthy eating) as high priority in improving access to healthy food in Lambton</li> <li>• County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 14 supports establishment of grocery stores and other facilities that promote access to healthy food in underserved areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most survey respondents (78%) reported buying food at variety/convenience stores less than once a month or never               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Only 4% buy food at these locations at least once a week, due to convenience (close to home or work, hours) and low prices (especially milk and special sale items)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Limited variety of specialty foods (e.g. vegan, organic, cultural, gluten free) identified as key concern by survey respondents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small food retailers should partner with local growers to sell local healthy food               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ranked by survey respondents as the top initiative for making healthy food access in Lambton easier</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Offer healthier choices at convenience stores</li> <li>• Create regulatory environment that allows establishment of grocery stores and other facilities that promote access to healthy food in areas that are underserved by such facilities*</li> <li>• Develop policies that encourage healthy food providers (including traditional food retailers such as grocery stores, as well as farmers' markets and alternative food networks) to locate in and offer healthier food options in underserved areas as identified in the report: Food Access in Sarnia-Lambton: Geographical Patterns (R1)</li> <li>• Support incentive programs (such as New York's Healthy Bodega Initiative or Philadelphia's Fresh Food Financing Initiative) for existing small food retailers to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Carry more healthy foods</li> <li>○ Partner with local growers, farmers' markets, local food programs, or community supported agriculture operations (R2)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

\* County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 14  
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## ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

*Creating access to healthy food in all communities; supporting programs that make healthy food more available and affordable; increasing availability of healthy food in institutions, workplaces, and other public facilities; and improving household food security.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<p><b>Housing Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 56% of survey respondents felt making more affordable housing and related social services such as employment assistance and subsidized daycare available is of high importance in making it easier to access healthy food in Lambton</li> <li>• A key informant who identified that there is low income housing located in areas of rural Lambton where there is no grocery store and healthy food is not easily accessible ranked Housing as high priority in improving access to healthy food in Lambton</li> <li>• 80% of survey respondents making &lt;\$30,000 per year thought that more affordable housing and social assistance is very important for making it easier to access healthy food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing is more affordable in Sarnia-Lambton than many other places in the province, but there is a limited range of affordable housing options and 24% of all dwellings are rentals</li> <li>• Over 10,500 Lambton residents (13% of home owners and 43% of tenants) spend more than 30% of their income on shelter</li> <li>• In 2013, 787 people were housed in emergency shelter, a 9% increase over 2012</li> <li>• 71% of key informants ranked Housing (strategizing new and existing residential development to align residents with opportunities to access healthy, affordable food) as low priority because they believe people would choose to live in areas near food access if it was important to them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create policies which direct and support new housing developments located near existing food retailers (H1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housing related policies should be examined in concert with the official plan review and considering existing policies from the Ontario Housing Policy Statement</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mandate mixed-use zoning in new developments over a certain size to make development context more supportive for new food retail facilities to open in close proximity to residences (H2)</li> <li>• Build subsidized housing near existing facilities including food retailers, emergency food providers and schools (H4)</li> <li>• Educate community about impact of residential development and related issues on access to healthy food</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transportation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 61% of survey respondents felt making a low cost transportation service available to help people access a grocery store is of high importance in making it easier to access healthy food in Lambton</li> <li>• Many key informants recognized that there may be a need for better transportation in urban areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ One key informant felt transportation is</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One key informant identified a lack of transportation as a barrier to healthy food access (e.g. grocery stores, food banks) in North Lambton specifically</li> <li>• 71% of key informants ranked Transportation (optimizing transportation infrastructure so that pedestrians, cyclists, bus riders and drivers can easily and efficiently reach food sources) as low priority because they do not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a community-based transportation system to take people to grocery stores for reduced cost</li> <li>• Establish online grocery ordering and delivery service available in rural areas</li> <li>• Make changes to public transportation routes to more directly link consumers living in poverty with options for purchasing healthy and affordable food (T1)</li> </ul>

## ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

*Creating access to healthy food in all communities; supporting programs that make healthy food more available and affordable; increasing availability of healthy food in institutions, workplaces, and other public facilities; and improving household food security.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<p>high priority in improving access to healthy food in Lambton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most survey respondents reported using a personal vehicle to travel to where they buy groceries, but this varied by household income:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Among those reporting an income less than \$30,000, 77% used a personal vehicle, compared to 97% of those with a household income of \$30,000 or more</li> <li>○ Lower income respondents also reported walking (10%), getting a ride with family or friends (6%) and using public transportation (5%)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Healthy Food in Institutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 75% of survey respondents felt selling more affordable healthy food at public places like arenas, community centres, hospitals and workplaces is of high importance in making it easier to access healthy food in Lambton</li> <li>• The majority (86%) of key informants ranked Institutions (leveraging community partners to support the local food environment) as high</li> </ul>	<p>perceive it as an issue in rural Lambton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key informants stated seasonal and economic realities may make this difficult; institutional food purchasing is mainly based on availability and cost</li> <li>• Key informants felt there is currently a lack of healthy food choices in public places such as arenas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Transportation related policies should be examined with the Transportation Master Plans</li> <li>• Design "complete streets" for all travelers (including bike paths or lanes for cyclists and sidewalks/crosswalks for pedestrians) that facilitate active travel between neighbourhoods and existing food retailers (T2)</li> <li>• Work with community organizations to create food delivery services for low-mobility and elderly residents, including helping residents access websites to set up grocery delivery accounts (like those available on <a href="http://grocerycheckout.ca">grocerycheckout.ca</a>) (T3)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ May include churches, volunteer groups such as Kiwanis and Rotary, Scouting organizations, YMCA, Red Cross, Goodwill, Children's Aid Society, Lambton Elderly Outreach, Community Care Access Centre, Lambton Public Health</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Public institutions create policies to increase the availability and affordability of healthier food options in all public venues (e.g., arenas, community centres) and public work places (e.g., city hall, health unit, hospitals) (I1)</li> <li>• Explore initiatives that bring healthy food to public places like arenas</li> <li>• Institutions (including schools, hospitals and</li> </ul>

## ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

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Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<p>priority in improving access to healthy food in Lambton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Key informants stated that because Lambton County is a producing community, distributing local food through local institutions would support the local economy and more food processing in Lambton</li> <li>○ Key informants felt there is currently a lack of healthy food choices in public places such as arenas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Unhealthy Food Near Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The School Food and Beverage Policy aims to support a healthy school environment by setting nutrition standards for food and beverages sold in publicly funded Ontario elementary and secondary schools               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lambton schools boards have stronger policies that apply to all food offered</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Survey participants supported offering healthier food options as a strategy to improving access to healthy food in schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many schools in Sarnia are within easy walking distance of multiple ‘junk food’ sites               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Especially students who attend school south of downtown Sarnia and in the northwest part of the city</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In the County, schools in Petrolia, Corunna and Forest have the highest exposure to unhealthy food sites within 500 metres</li> <li>• Schools with little exposure to unhealthy food sites tend to be located outside of population centres</li> </ul>	<p>nursing homes) create policies in support of the purchase of healthy local food (I2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a maximum allowable density for fast food and/or junk food outlets within communities, especially near schools (R3)</li> <li>• Develop and enact policies to restrict advertising sources of unhealthy foods (e.g., fast food restaurants, convenience stores) that are located close to preschools, elementary schools and secondary schools (R4)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Healthy Food Access Programs</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Nutrition Programs offer a healthy snack or meal to approximately 6,800 children through 38 SNPs in Lambton County (2014)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recognized in survey as a strategy for improving access to healthy food in</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since 2006, Student Nutrition Program funding provided by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services covers only 13 cents per student per day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify organizations which link residents who use various social service programs with incentive programs (vouchers, coupons, educational campaigns) to buy more healthy foods (I3)</li> </ul>

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Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<p>schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key informants felt gardening (including community gardening) plays an important role in appreciating where our food comes from and promoting healthy eating (refer to "Urban Agriculture")</li> <li>• Food access programs such as Community Supported Agriculture and the Garden Fresh Box were identified as venues to improve access to healthy food by community survey respondents</li> </ul>		
<b>Food Insecurity</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As expected, survey results show food insecurity increases as income decreases</li> <li>• Survey results show the percent of four person households spending less than \$150 on food per week decreases as household income increases:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ About 62% of those making &lt;\$30,000 per year spent less than \$150 per week compared to 36% of those making &lt;\$100,000.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 56% of survey respondents felt making more affordable housing and related social services such as employment assistance and subsidized daycare available is of high importance in making it easier to access healthy food in Lambton             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Survey respondents also identified advocating for increased social assistance rates and minimum wage as a</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Nutritious Food Basket data shows some Lambton households do not have enough money to meet their needs after paying for rent and food</li> <li>• Over 8,000 Lambton residents (7.7%) reported moderate or severe food insecurity (2011/12)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Means either experiencing actual issues with getting adequate quality or amount of food, or worrying about source of food</li> <li>○ 2.6% increase since 2007/2008</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 29% of survey respondents reported some level of food insecurity             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ranged from 4% who visited a food bank or soup kitchen to 24% who did not eat the quality or variety of food they wanted due to lack of money</li> <li>○ Were more likely to report their diet was only somewhat healthy or not healthy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for long term solutions to household food insecurity that address the underlying causes and related issues (e.g. poverty, wages, employment, housing)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Advocate for living wage</li> <li>○ Advocate for affordable housing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide a range of affordable housing options and related social services such as employment assistance and subsidized daycare to help alleviate economic constraints on purchasing healthy food (H3)</li> <li>• Educate community about the link between food insecurity and access to housing, etc.</li> <li>• Increase amount of healthy food (especially fresh produce) available at food banks by:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Educating the public about what healthy foods to donate</li> <li>○ Offering tax incentive to people who donate to emergency food programs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<p>strategy to improve access to healthy food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency food programs exist in Lambton to provide short-term assistance:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 10 food banks, 2 soup kitchens, 11 mobile markets, Christmas hamper program</li> <li>○ Information about accessing these programs is available in <i>Food Services and Programs in Lambton County</i> from Lambton Public Health</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensuring food security for everyone is supported by the County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 14</li> </ul>	<p>than those not food insecure (53% vs. 31%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key informants felt food choices are often based on cost, leading some to make unhealthy choices</li> <li>• Percentage of survey respondents rating the following initiatives as highly important decreased as income increased:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More community gardens, more affordable housing and social assistance, and low cost transportation</li> <li>○ 80% of those making &lt;\$30,000 per year thought that more affordable housing and social assistance is very important for making it easier to access healthy food</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Challenges associated with emergency food programs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Less than ¼ of food insecure households make use of food banks</li> <li>○ Survey respondents were concerned about lack of access to healthy food in food banks</li> <li>○ Short-term solution – doesn't address root causes of food insecurity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increasing number of mobile markets</li> </ul>

## FOOD KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

*Increasing knowledge related to the food system and healthy eating and supporting food skills development.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key informants would like to see a food system where consumers are well educated</li> <li>• 33 programs and 9 services in Lambton County address food knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Survey respondents recognized importance of food skills education programs such as supermarket tours, community kitchens, and community gardens               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Schools identified as a key venue</li> <li>○ Support for food education as part of school curriculum</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 68% of community survey respondents felt creating local food hub sell local food and offer programs to teach people how to grow and cook food is of high importance in making it easier to access healthy food in Lambton</li> <li>• Most survey respondents reported their eating habits were healthy (47%)/very healthy (13%)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Only 3% said not healthy</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Percentage of survey respondents reporting healthy food was one of the most important factors when buying groceries increased with increasing income (from 46% to 67%)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Similar trend with education</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Sales in the organic food market in Canada tripled to almost \$3 billion from 2006 to 2012               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 46 certified organic products produced for sale in Lambton (2011)</li> <li>○ 1.5% of all Ontario farms certified organic or in the process (2011)</li> <li>○ Organic was more commonly reported as an important factor when buying groceries by survey respondents within Sarnia/Point Edward compared to the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11% of survey respondents identified food-related education and awareness as their main concern about food in Lambton, including awareness of existing programs</li> <li>• Key informants identified a gap in the community's food skills and general food system knowledge, especially in the younger population</li> <li>• Lambton has high rates of diet-related disease, including obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, cancer:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In 2011/12, 56% of adult residents classified as overweight or obese                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lambton residents significantly more likely than Ontario residents to be obese</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ High blood pressure reported by 23% of residents in 2011/12, including 53% of those 65 years and older</li> <li>○ In 2009, cardiovascular diseases were the leading causes of death in Lambton</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 35% of survey respondents identified the cost of food as their most important concern about food in Lambton               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Specific concerns included:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cost of buying healthy foods and specialty foods</li> <li>▪ Buying food from farmer more expensive than buying from large food retailer</li> <li>▪ Food more expensive at rural grocery stores than urban stores</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Percentage of survey respondents</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach food skills, including a seasonal component</li> <li>• Organizations endorsing the Sarnia-Lambton Food Charter should work together to build skills in the community around food production, preservation and storage (CG7)</li> <li>• Create a local food hub to sell local food and offer programs to teach people how to grow and cook food</li> <li>• Incorporate food literacy into the school system:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Curriculum and classroom</li> <li>○ Before and after programs</li> <li>○ Community use of schools</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Increase number of community programs with a cooking component</li> <li>• Provide adequate training and support for teachers, food skills program facilitators and workers who provide food skills</li> <li>• Encourage parents/teachers to involve children in age-appropriate food preparation from young age</li> <li>• Advocate for affordable housing with functional kitchens, and increased access to healthy food</li> <li>• Create programs that build job skills (e.g., incubator kitchens, culinary training, food service, catering, and safe food handler courses)</li> <li>• Advocate for adequate program funding and appropriate kitchen facilities in community settings</li> <li>• Educate the community about factors affecting the cost of food, including the cost of</li> </ul>

## FOOD KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

*Increasing knowledge related to the food system and healthy eating and supporting food skills development.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
rest of the County	<p>reporting low price was one of the most important factors when buying groceries decreased as income increased (from 82% to 55%) – similar pattern seen with education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key informants felt food choices are often based on cost, leading some to make unhealthy choices</li> <li>• Trend of food deskilling in the population               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Linked to a transition toward the use of more convenience foods and the decline of home economics and culinary skills in the Ontario school curriculum</li> <li>○ Noted by key informants and survey respondents</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 16% of survey respondents identified issues related to food production as their main concern about food in Lambton, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chemicals on our food (from the surrounding environment)</li> <li>○ Use of pesticides and herbicides in food production</li> <li>○ Use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in our food supply</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>local food production and benefits of buying local</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate the community about popular terms in the media, such as “organic” and “GMO”</li> </ul>

## FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT

*Improving food waste reduction and diversion.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most key informants did not express concerns with managing waste               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2 key informants recognized the large amount of food waste produced by households is a problem</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Key informants supported development of an education program to encourage household food waste reduction</li> <li>• In November 2013, Ontario government amended the Local Food Act to give farmers who donate to a community food program (e.g. a food bank) a non-refundable tax credit worth 25% of the current market value of the donated agricultural product</li> <li>• County of Lambton Official Plan Update Background Report No. 14 supports increases reuse of resources and decreasing waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No commonly agreed upon definition of food waste in Canada, and currently not enough data on where food waste occurs and its causes</li> <li>• 30-40% of food produced is lost, not including the additional waste produced by use of disposable packaging, especially with fast food</li> <li>• Food waste not high priority for many businesses, largely because most businesses don't recognize how much food waste they produce and how it impacts profitability</li> <li>• Consumers are the biggest food waste contributors, accounting for 51% of all food waste in Canada. Specific causes include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Attitudes toward food (e.g. mindset that food is cheap and plentiful)</li> <li>○ Excess purchases (e.g. tendency to purchase more food if a discount is available)</li> <li>○ Infrequent purchases</li> <li>○ Confusion about date codes</li> <li>○ Preparing more food than is needed</li> <li>○ Throwing out small amounts of food at a time</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Priority needs to be moved from waste diversion (such as recycling) to waste reduction and maximizing value from waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather further data on waste management practices in Lambton</li> <li>• Engage a broad range of stakeholders to work together to address food waste</li> <li>• Improve understanding of food industry stakeholders about the full range of wastes associated with food waste, including wasted energy, labour, and production</li> <li>• Raise awareness about food waste</li> <li>• Provide education about food waste</li> <li>• Reduce the volume of food waste generated</li> <li>• Feed hungry people – donate extra food to food banks, soup kitchens, shelters</li> <li>• Feed animals – divert food scraps to animal feed</li> <li>• Industrial users – provide waste oils for rendering and fuel conversion; and food scraps for digestion to recover energy</li> <li>• Encourage household composting to divert waste from landfills</li> </ul>

## FOOD SYSTEM CONNECTIONS

*Improving connections and supporting collaboration among the sectors of Lambton County's food system.*

Strengths/Assets	Challenges/Gaps	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sarnia-Lambton Food Coalition</li> <li>• Many key informants described a healthy food system as one with strong individual sectors (especially the processing, distributing, and retailing sectors) that are well connected and involve collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders</li> <li>• Half of key informants ranked Food System (working with local food advocates to support a healthy food system that strengthens our community's health and economy) as high priority in improving access to healthy food in Lambton</li> <li>• Key informants felt increasing awareness among key stakeholders and policy makers is critical to support a healthy food system and key to accessing potential funding opportunities</li> <li>• The Sarnia-Lambton Food Charter, which identifies our community's vision of a healthy food system, was identified by a key informant as a starting point for meaningful action to improve the local food system</li> <li>• County of Lambton Strategic Plan includes an area of effort related to actively pursuing collaborative opportunities with community partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key informants played a variety of roles in Lambton County's food system, demonstrating that some connection between sectors already exists, but that there are opportunities to create further linkages between stakeholders</li> <li>• Many key informants recognized that motivating key stakeholders to become involved may be challenging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage government to support and provide resources for local food network activities (L1)</li> <li>• Build a sustainable healthy Food Master Plan as part of an official plan review process (L2)</li> <li>• Include stakeholders from the local food system (including farmers, producers, gardeners, retailers, community service providers, educators and citizens) in the official plan review process to ensure that all voices are represented (L3)</li> <li>• All community food stakeholders should undertake public education about the importance of the local food system (L4)</li> <li>• Encourage endorsement and implementation of the Sarnia-Lambton Food Charter among individual municipalities and community groups to help guide and influence policies that promote healthy eating, access to healthy local food and sustainability of the local food system (L5)</li> </ul>