

Envisioning a Preferred Metro-Vancouver Agri-food System Future

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It is critical to articulate the characteristics of a preferred agri-food system to guide holistic regional planning, dialog and initiatives. A focused, inspiring and constructive position from which to work will bring stakeholders into the fold and together in common vision, objective and effort; all more likely to give rise to full, unencumbered exploration and action for truly sustainable agri-food systems as part of resilient cities. The following describes elements of a preferred Metro-Vancouver agri-food system:

1. Our agri-food system will be economically robust in all of its dimensions and contribute significantly and directly to our local/ regional economies.
2. Our urban focused agriculturists will capture significantly more of the marketplace value of foods and products, at least to levels which afford reasonable rates of return.
3. Our agri-food sector will put people to work in satisfying jobs. New jobs will be a measure of its economic and social success and viability.
4. Our agriculture will appeal to a new generation and represent a social and economic sector in which they feel they can pursue rewarding, satisfying careers, live happy and meaningful lives and contribute to society in valued, personally rewarding ways.
5. Our agriculture engages our urban populace; it is not segregated from the vast majority. Rather it is a fully integrated and positive part of everyone's everyday lives; it connects people with the means to their sustenance, to the natural world and to each other. It fosters community.
6. Our urban and peri-urban agri-food system is environmentally sound, enhances our natural environment and contributes to the mitigation of environmental degradation. Farmers are recognized as skilled stewards of precious natural resources and farming as a critical, knowledge intensive and noble profession.
7. Our agriculture will make healthy fresh foods readily available to all and contribute to the mitigation of diet related disease.
8. Our agriculture, by virtue of how we support it, plan for it, integrate it with other aspects of life and urbanity and relate to it, will in and of itself be an impediment to land speculation, unbridled urban sprawl and loss of arable land.
9. Our regions urban focused agri-food system will be diverse, multi-dimensional and strive to create and support many new models. Adaptability and hence resiliency lies in diversity that affords a multitude of opportunities for response and adaptation
10. Our agri-food system will genuinely address food security issues, ultimately focus on achieving regional food sovereignty and thus contribute directly and in substantive ways to urban sustainability.