

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT
Regional Planning Services Department

Staff Report to the Regional Planning Committee
Meeting of Wednesday, March 16, 2005

SUBJECT:

Food Security Policy for the Capital Region – Presentation by CR-FAIR

BACKGROUND:

The Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CR-FAIR) is a community organization whose mission is to increase knowledge about and bring about change in the food and agriculture system in the Capital Region, aimed at: increasing the viability of farming; reducing hunger; increasing the supply, consumption and diversity of locally produced and processed food; and, increasing knowledge and involvement with food and agriculture issues in the community. CR-FAIR's vision is "a sustainable and secure local food and agricultural system that provides safe, sufficient, culturally accepted, nutritious food accessible to everyone in the Capital Region through dignified means."

CR-FAIR published in January 2004 a baseline assessment of food security in the Capital Region (Attachment A – Executive Summary). CR-FAIR has prepared a draft proposed Capital Region Food Charter (Attachment B) for review and discussion by local governments in the Capital Region, and has requested the opportunity to address the committee.

DISCUSSION:

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), in aiming for the development of compact urban settlement and the protection of rural areas for rural purposes, most particularly the protection of lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve for long term agricultural use, envisions the preservation of farmland as a biophysical resource. Designation of the ALR for long-term protection in the RGS is supplemented with policies regarding buffering agriculture lands from activities in adjacent urban areas.

The RGS also considers food from an economic point of view, suggesting that actions should be considered in the regional economic strategy to support agriculture, including finding fair and effective ways to improve irrigation water supplies and access to nutrients, to investigate recycling of wastewater for agriculture and horticulture, and to promote the economic potential of expanded local and export markets for farm products.

Finally, in initiative 2.2 (Manage Natural Resources and the Environment Sustainably), the RGS considers food as a strategic resource in action 5, which calls for a study to be undertaken within 5 years of RGS adoption, to review long term strategic resource needs in the Capital Region, including food, with specific attention to local food production. This project would investigate long-term demand, security of supply, the potential impact of

factors such as climate change and fossil fuel depletion, and make policy and program recommendations to ensure that future needs are successfully anticipated and met.

In addition, the RGS guiding principles express a commitment to work toward greater regional sustainability. In this light, it may be appropriate to include food security as an issue for further consideration in the five-year review of the RGS, scheduled for 2008. More immediately however, the committee could seek advice and input from the Development and Planning Advisory Committee (DPAC) on this proposal.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Regional Planning Committee:

1. receive this report and presentation for information; and,
2. refer the draft Capital Region Food Charter to the Development and Planning Advisory Committee for review and comment.

RGS CONSISTENCY:

The question of food security is partially addressed in the RGS.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

Mark Hornell, MCIP
Director of Regional Planning Services

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

W.M. Jordan, Executive Director