

Food Security Assessment

CITY OF MERRITT OCP UPDATE | SPRING 2021



Food Security Assessment

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Prepared for the City of Merritt



Prepared by Urban Food Strategies for WSP



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Executive Summary

Food security is, “A situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice”.¹ In recognition of the importance of food security in Merritt, the City is undertaking an assessment of food security in Merritt in order to engage stakeholders in inventory assets, and assessing opportunities and challenges.

Many people and households in Merritt are food insecure. Average income in Merritt is 17% lower than the rest of the province at \$74,977. With 35% more than the BC average of homeowners in Merritt spending more than 30% of household income on housing coupled with 42% more unemployment in Merritt as compared to the rest of the province, food insecurity is likely a significant challenge facing many residents.² The Nicola Valley Food Bank has experienced a 75% increase in membership in 2020 compared to 2019.

There are many food assets in Merritt including community gardens, grocery stores, restaurants, garden centres, and food programs. In addition, Merritt is situated in an agricultural region with many farmers producing a range of foods. Despite these many assets, the vast majority of people do not have walkable access (i.e. 5 minutes walking distance) to a grocery store. There are approximately 640 hectares of AR-1 (Agricultural) land in Merritt. If agricultural land was optimized to feed the community, Merritt theoretically has the capacity to become 8% self-sufficient. However, if regional farmers and farms were included, the level of self-sufficiency could exceed 100%.

There are many issues and opportunities for strengthening food security in Merritt.

Key Issues	Key Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty, unemployment and low income <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of walking distance to a grocery store <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of affordable housing <input type="checkbox"/> COVID and added pressure on food banks and other front line services <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of food skills for healthy and year round enjoyment of local food <input type="checkbox"/> Increased costs for farmers and independent local food businesses <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of food storage and processing infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Integrating food security into the OCP <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing poverty, housing affordability <input type="checkbox"/> Growing the food and ag economy <input type="checkbox"/> Community food infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting local food champions <input type="checkbox"/> Back and front yard gardening, urban agriculture and edible landscaping <input type="checkbox"/> Food trucks and farmers markets <input type="checkbox"/> Farm stands and food sharing <input type="checkbox"/> Learning about indigenous food sovereignty and history of indigenous food systems

¹ Hamm, M.; Bellows, A. (2003). Community Food Security and Nutrition Educators. Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior 35 (1): 37-43.

² Merritt Community Health Profile. Accessed Aug 4, 2020:
<http://communityhealth.phsa.ca/HealthProfiles/HealthReportHealthStatusAndChronicDisease/Merritt>

Key Issues	Key Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Natural and market emergencies □ Climate change impacts on agriculture □ Water demand for increasing market gardening and agriculture in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Regional food and agriculture planning/sector development □ Emergency preparedness and recovery □ Climate change adaptation in food and agriculture

A draft policy set to be integrated into the OCP and that address these issues and opportunities is summarized below.

City of Merritt Food Security Goal: To increase levels of household and community food security in Merritt.

Objective 1: Integrate food security into municipal social planning frameworks and activities

Policy 1.1 Work with social service organizations to find ways to support community food security and antipoverty activities.

Policy 1.2 Foster a community of caring and being nice to others.

Policy 1.3 Consider developing an affordable housing strategy that identifies the ways the City of Merritt can have impact.

Objective 2: Grow the local food and agriculture economy in Merritt

Policy 2.1 Ensure community and commercial direct marketing opportunities are a supported use in Merritt.

Policy 2.2. Work with producer organizations and food businesses to determine the need for, and level of interest in, establishing shared resources such as food and agriculture product storage, processing, sales, and distribution.

Objective 3: Address food security in land use planning

Policy 3.1 Consider adding indoor growing and rooftop farming as permitted uses in the M1 and M2 zones.

Policy 3.2 Plan for residential areas to be near to commercial areas that include grocery stores, or along transit and cycle routes to ensure access to grocery stores.

Policy 3.3 Update existing policies and bylaws to accommodate a range of food system opportunities.

Objective 4: Shift municipal purchasing and operations to incorporate local food

Policy 4.1 Consider developing restorative landscaping guidelines that includes edible plants and perennials, pollinator gardens, and low-water food garden demonstrations.

Policy 4.2 Explore the opportunity to create a “local first” purchasing policy for local food.

Objective 5: Advocate for a Food Secure Merritt

Policy 5.1 Explore the idea of establishing a guaranteed basic income and form an advocacy position that may be communicated to senior levels of government.

Policy 5.2 Support regional food and agriculture planning.

1. Introduction

The City of Merritt is currently updating the Official Community Plan (OCP). As part of this, a *Food Security Assessment* is being conducted in order to effectively assess and integrate food security into the OCP to support the City in playing a role in increasing community food security. Through this process, the project team will be reaching out to key individuals and groups to help shape the recommendations.

This *Food Security Assessment* includes key concept definitions, summary of the role of local government in food security and food system planning, the local planning context, and inventory of existing food assets in Merritt, key organizations and players, identification key issues and opportunities, and recommended OCP policies.

With increased variability in climate, long-term impacts of COVID 19, and other external factors, communities are increasingly becoming more aware of the fragility of the food system and developing strategies to prepare for and recover from natural and human disasters as well as protect farmland and work to support the food and agriculture sector. In these ways, both household and community food security are key considerations in community planning.

Key Concepts

There are five key concepts to clearly define at the outset of this planning process. These concepts provide an important starting point for assessing food security in Merritt.

Household and Community Food Security

Community food security is defined as:

*A situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.*³

This term assumes that the interconnected systems and organizations that impact human, ecological, and economic health are aligned to generate long lasting and sustainable solutions. Individual or household food insecurity looks more closely at the health of the individual on a nutritional and food access basis, aiming to move people vertically from low to high food security.

³ Hamm, M.; Bellows, A. (2003). Community Food Security and Nutrition Educators. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* 35 (1): 37-43.

Household food insecurity occurs when a household worries about or lacks the financial means to buy healthy, safe, personally acceptable food. Household food insecurity can occur at three levels: marginally food-insecure; moderately food insecure; severely food insecure.^{4,5}

While local governments have many ways to increase food security and interact with many dimensions of the food system, they are limited in their ability to directly address some of the core drivers of food insecurity such as poverty and low- income status of residents. However, there are areas where local governments do have influence in some of these areas of food insecurity. For example, affordable housing and local economic development, often priorities for local government as implemented through regulation, incentives, and land use planning, can positively impact household income and food security.



Core issues: Low income and poverty limit ability to buy food that is healthy, of good quality, and is culturally appropriate

Example responses: Public health interventions, emergency food and meal programs, affordable housing and jobs, poverty reduction, anti-racism, and many others.



Core issues: Overall disconnect from food systems creates vulnerability.

Example responses: Protecting farmland and farmers, re-establishing local food infrastructure, building food skills (growing, preparing, preserving food, connecting consumers and producers, emergency preparedness and recovery planning, culture of caring agriculture and food security planning, food and agriculture innovation, spaces for food celebration and farmers markets, and many others.

Figure 1: Household and Community Food Security

⁴ Li N, Dachner, N, Tarasuk, V, Zhang, R, Kurrein, M, Harris, T, Gustin, S, Rasali, D. Priority health equity indicators for British Columbia: Household food insecurity report. Vancouver, BC: Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)2016.

⁵ Tarasuk, Valerie, Andy Mitchell, and Naomi Dachner (2012). Household Food Insecurity in Canada 2012. PROOF.

Goals of Food Security

The Population and Public Health program at BC Centre for Disease Control outlines the goals of food security as:

Increase[ing] physical, social, and economic access to nutritious, safe, personally acceptable food with a focus on increasing availability of healthy food produced in a sustainable manner⁶

This food security goal encompasses a broad scope of food security definitions, including the UN Food and Agriculture Organization FAO definition,⁷ community food security⁸ and individual and household food insecurity.⁹

Food System

A food system consists of the inter-related stages that food goes through from the natural soil, water, and air resources that enable us to grow/raise/hunt/fish/forage food to the personal and commercial practices of harvesting, processing, storing, distributing, buying, selling, eating, celebrating, and recovering waste. These stages make up the basic elements of a food system. Education, governance and capacity building are key supports for the food system. Food systems exist at multiple scales including local, regional, provincial, national, and international. Six elements of a food system may be described as: 1) Primary food production 2) Processing and storage 3) Distribution and transportation 4) Buying and selling, 5) Eating, culture, and celebration, and 6) Waste recovery.

Figure 2 depicts a simplified view of a food system. There are many food system diagrams and models that describe the elements somewhat differently, but the core ideas are largely consistent.

⁶ Provincial Health Services Authority. Food Security. Vancouver, BC: Provincial Health Services Authority; 2016 [cited 2016 Sept 25]

⁷ FAO. World Food Summit. United Nations; 1996 [cited 2006 May 1]; Available from: http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cdr.asp?url_file=/docrep/003/w3613e/w3613e00.htm.

⁸ Hamm MW, Bellows AC. Community Food Security and Nutrition Educators. Journal of Nutrition Education Behaviour. 2003; 35:37-43

⁹ Li N, Dachner, N, Tarasuk, V, Zhang, R, Kurrein, M, Harris, T, Gustin, S, Rasali, D. Priority health equity indicators for British Columbia: Household food insecurity report. Vancouver, BC: Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)2016

A sustainable food system ¹⁰ furthers the ecological, social, and economic health of a community, region, province, country, and world and can be reproduced over multiple generations.



Figure 2: Food and Agriculture System. Source: Urban Food Strategies

¹⁰ de la Salle, Janine (2008). City of Edmonton Policy Set. Some sustainable food system characteristics drawn from: Pothukuchi, K. and Kaufman, J.L. (1999) Placing the Food System on the Urban Agenda. The Role of Municipal Institutions in Food Systems Planning.

Characteristics of a sustainable food system include, but are not limited to the list below. A sustainable food system:

- Is **secure**, and therefore reliable and resilient to change (including climate change, rising energy prices, etc.) and accessible to all members of society;
- Is energy efficient;
- Is an **economic generator** for farmers, whole communities, and regions;
- Is environmentally beneficial or benign;
- Uses creative **water reclamation and conservation** strategies for agricultural uses;
- **Balances** food imports with local capacity;
- Adopts **regionally-appropriate** agricultural practices and crop choices;
- Contributes to both community and ecological health;
- Builds soil quality and farmland through the **recycling of organic waste**;
- Supports multiple forms of **urban as well as rural food** production;
- Ensures that food **processing facilities** are available to farmers and processors of all scales;
- Is **celebrated** through community events, markets, restaurants etc;
- **Preserves biodiversity** in agro-ecosystems as well as in the crop selection;
- Has a strong **educational focus** to create awareness of food and agricultural issues; and
- Is **socially just** and **fairly traded** by providing a fair wage to producers and processors locally and abroad.

Food Assets ¹¹

Food assets are places, programs, policies, businesses, and organizations that play a role in the food system. Local governments and communities have access to and influence with many food assets. Generally, food assets can be understood in eight major categories- Table 1 presents these categories and provides examples of food assets.

<i>Table 1: Food Assets and Examples</i>	
Food Asset	Examples
1) Food production, hunting, fishing, and foraging areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Farmland, ranchland, grasslands <input type="checkbox"/> Rivers, lakes, and streams <input type="checkbox"/> Harvesting wild foods (e.g. berries, mushrooms, medicines)
2) Community and commercial processing facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Packing houses <input type="checkbox"/> Community and commercial kitchens <input type="checkbox"/> Cold storage <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial and commissary kitchens

¹¹ There is no common definition of “food asset”. The consultant has developed this definition based on the understanding of how it is being used in other jurisdictions and planning processes.

Table 1: Food Assets and Examples

Food Asset	Examples
3) Community food culture	<input type="checkbox"/> Harvest festivals <input type="checkbox"/> Food trucks and mobile food markets <input type="checkbox"/> Plazas and open spaces for food celebration <input type="checkbox"/> Agritourism
4) (Healthy) food sources	<input type="checkbox"/> Grocery stores, drug stores <input type="checkbox"/> Farm stands, farmers' markets <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurants, caterers, pubs, and cafes <input type="checkbox"/> Food hubs <input type="checkbox"/> Community gardens, back/front yard gardens, edible landscaping
5) Emergency food relief	<input type="checkbox"/> Charitable food organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Meal and hamper programs <input type="checkbox"/> School breakfast and lunch programs
6) Learning environments	<input type="checkbox"/> School and community cooking classes/courses <input type="checkbox"/> Business startup incubators <input type="checkbox"/> Community gardens
7) Food recovery systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Cold storage <input type="checkbox"/> Collection and distribution networks <input type="checkbox"/> Processing facilities
8) Macro supports for food security	<input type="checkbox"/> Affordable housing <input type="checkbox"/> Employment and business opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Social connectedness <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-modal communities (walkable, bikable) <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership and management

Roles in food security

There are many distinct and overlapping roles in planning for food and agriculture systems. This complex web is somewhat simplified by focusing food and agriculture plans at one level of jurisdiction. Often times, food and agriculture system planning occurs at the local government level, including regional and municipal governments. However, there are many other roles that can become an important part in plan creation and implementation. These roles are briefly described below.

Federal and Provincial Levels of Government

The federal government has jurisdiction over trade agreements, health inspection and food regulation, among other things. The activities of Agrifood Canada: *range from the farmer to the consumer, from the farm to global markets, through all phases of producing, processing and marketing of farm, food and bio-based products.*

The Provincial Government in BC and the Ministry of Agriculture also have jurisdiction on regulating farming and has passed legislation that regulates land use in the Agricultural Land Reserve and are involved with economic development initiatives.

Health Authorities

There are six Health Authorities in BC. Merritt is in the Interior Health Region. Increasingly, community nutritionists and Medical Health Officers are engaging in community planning exercises like creating Official Community Plans. This in turn, can provide an important link between Health and food and agriculture system planning.

Community Sector, Schools, and Post-Secondary Institutions

Volunteers and staff in the community and non-profit sector are critical partners in developing and implementing food system plans. Schools and post-secondary institutions can also be part of providing food system education in the classroom and program development.

Industry Associations and Business Sector

There are many industry associations and business sector interest groups that are also a key part of creating and implementing food system plans. The BC Cattleman's Association, the Small-Scale Processors Association, Business Improvement Associations, Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development agencies are all examples of resources and stakeholders in food and agriculture system planning.

Local Government

Often local governments will be the primary facilitator for and lead on food and agriculture system planning processes. While local governments have many ways to increase community food security and interact with many dimensions of the food system, they are limited in their ability to directly address some of the core drivers of household food insecurity such as poverty and low- income status of residents. However, there are areas where local governments do have influence in some of these areas of food insecurity. For example, affordable housing and local economic development, often priorities for local government as implemented through regulation, incentives, and land use planning, can positively impact household income and, indirectly, food security.

There are many other specific ways that local government can have leverage in food security. Table 2 describes local government leverage with different types of food assets. This is not intended to be exhaustive but rather illustrative.

Table 2: Food Assets and Local Government Leverage Points

Food Asset	Local Government Leverage
Food production, hunting, fishing, foraging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture in the ALR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agriculture planning and policy (OCPs, ZBLs) ○ Managing/ regulating increasingly complex issues on farmland

Table 2: Food Assets and Local Government Leverage Points

Food Asset	Local Government Leverage
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Agriculture and Farming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Ensure urban agriculture is allowed and supported in public and private lands (OCPs, ZBLs) ◦ Managing potential conflicts (e.g. wildlife) ◦ Encouraging / requiring food assets including urban agriculture in development projects (tax breaks, requirements, design guidelines). ◦ Providing education and resources ◦ Collaborating with community partners • Indigenous Food Systems (water, land, air) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Establishing teaching, learning, and stewardship centres/programs ◦ Responding positively to land management needs.
(Healthy) food sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and policy to support walkable (800m) access to healthy food assets (e.g. grocery store, farm stand, community garden, farmers market) • Supporting food hub testing and development • Support Farmer's markets • Zoning for food districts, light industrial for agriculture sector (Locate outside of the ALR) • Zoning for food retail especially healthy options • Adopting food truck policies and creating permits • Purchasing relationships with local producers and caterers • Transportation planning
Learning environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on new food-security related initiatives. • Be open to requests/applications for new facilities to support educational programs
Community food culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing space and programming for food celebrations • Collaborating with community partners to deepen food culture • Providing signage, communications, and marketing of food assets, where appropriate • Designing public spaces to support a lively streetscape (e.g. patios, spill-out onto the sidewalk, street trees, plazas)
Capacity for social connectedness and emergency food relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with food banks to find appropriate facilities • Preparing for emergencies (education, planning, preparation)

Table 2: Food Assets and Local Government Leverage Points

Food Asset	Local Government Leverage
Food Recovery Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with food gleaning programs to find facilities • Working with businesses to find processing facilities • Business license rules • Partnership programs • Developing internal programs to reduce food waste within local government operations • Regional organic diversion policies and programs
Research, knowledge creation, and policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting baseline food assessments (e.g. food security, local food economy assessments, food hub feasibility) • Conducting best practice research from other jurisdictions • Engaging with stakeholders and the general public • Developing food and agriculture strategies and plans
Macro supports (food insecurity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local governance and management systems (e.g. Food Policy Councils) • Protecting and restoring the environment (e.g. Link to indigenous food systems, OCP policies and requirements) • Implementing affordable housing strategies • Attracting livable wage job opportunities

2. Planning Context

Indigenous History and Traditional Food Systems

The City of Merritt is located in the unceded territory of the Nlaka'pamux and Syilx Nations. Today there are six Indigenous Communities in or near Merritt.

The recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission regarding health as well as the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)¹² provide a foundation for informing the update of the OCP. In November of 2019, the Province of BC passed legislation to implement UNDRIP,¹³ which has further elevated the process of decolonization and reconciliation in local and provincial government policy.

A recent community highlight included headlines about a 19-year old Indigenous man from Merritt who raised \$5,000 for the Nicola Valley Food Bank by running a marathon.¹⁴

Agricultural Land Reserve in and Around the City of Merritt

Merritt is situated in an agricultural area with ranching and forage crops being the predominant form of agriculture. As such, there are large areas of Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) in and near to Merritt. Figure 3 provides a regional context map showing ALR lands in the region and Figure 4 shows ALR within the city boundaries. Currently there are approximately 640 hectares of AR-1 land in Merritt.

Walkable and Bikeable Access to the Grocery Store

There are three main grocery stores in Merritt in addition to several smaller grocers and corner stores. Using the main grocery stores as anchors for where most people access food (including healthy food), many residential areas in Merritt do not have walkable access to a healthy food source. Approximately 6% of residences are within a 5-minute walk of a main grocery store. Figure 5 provides an analysis of walkable access to grocery stores.

¹² <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>

¹³ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/indigenous-people/new-relationship/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples>

¹⁴ <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/indigenous-teen-overcomes-past-and-raises-5000-for-local-food-bank-with-ultra-marathon>

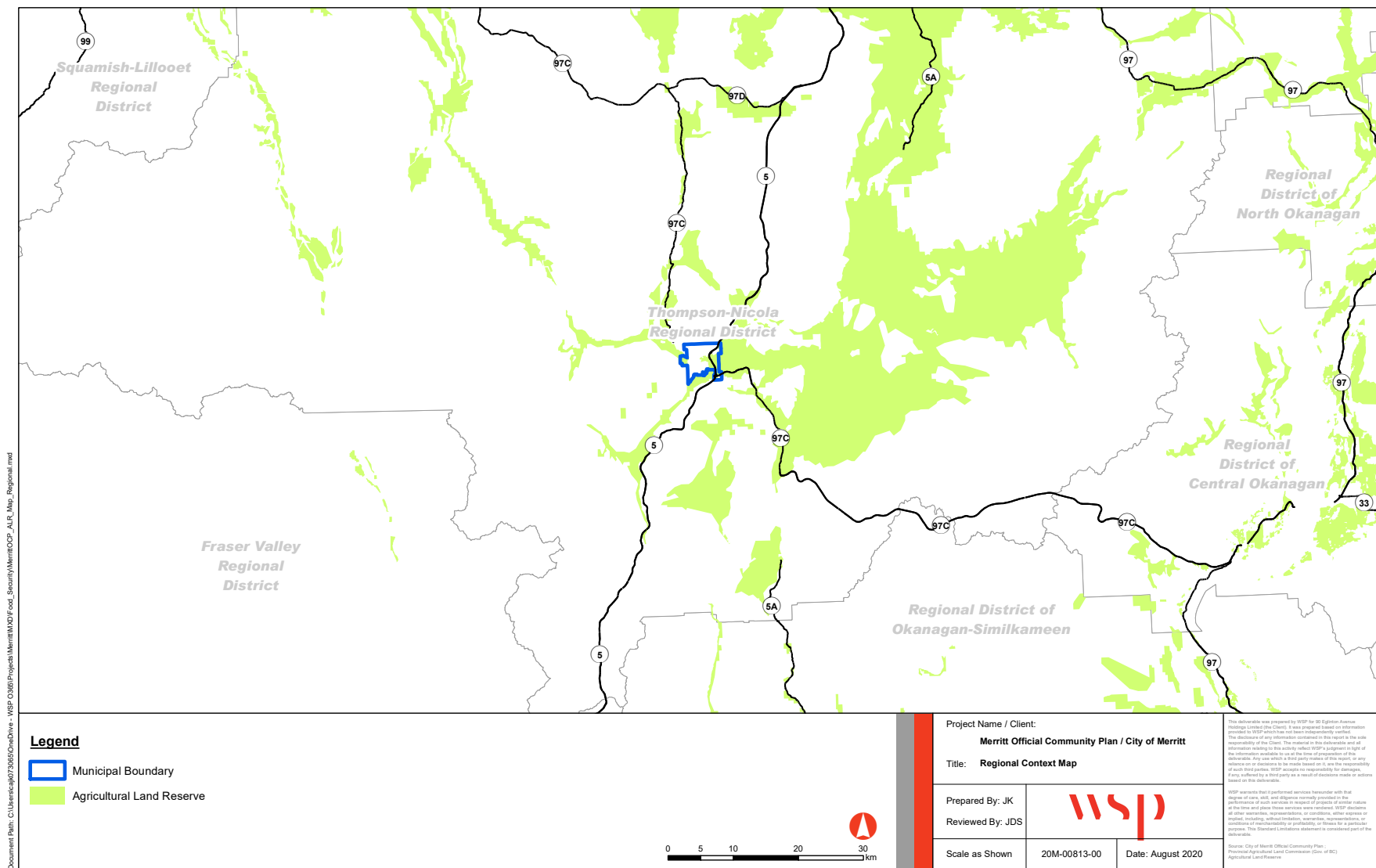


Figure 3: Regional ALR Lands

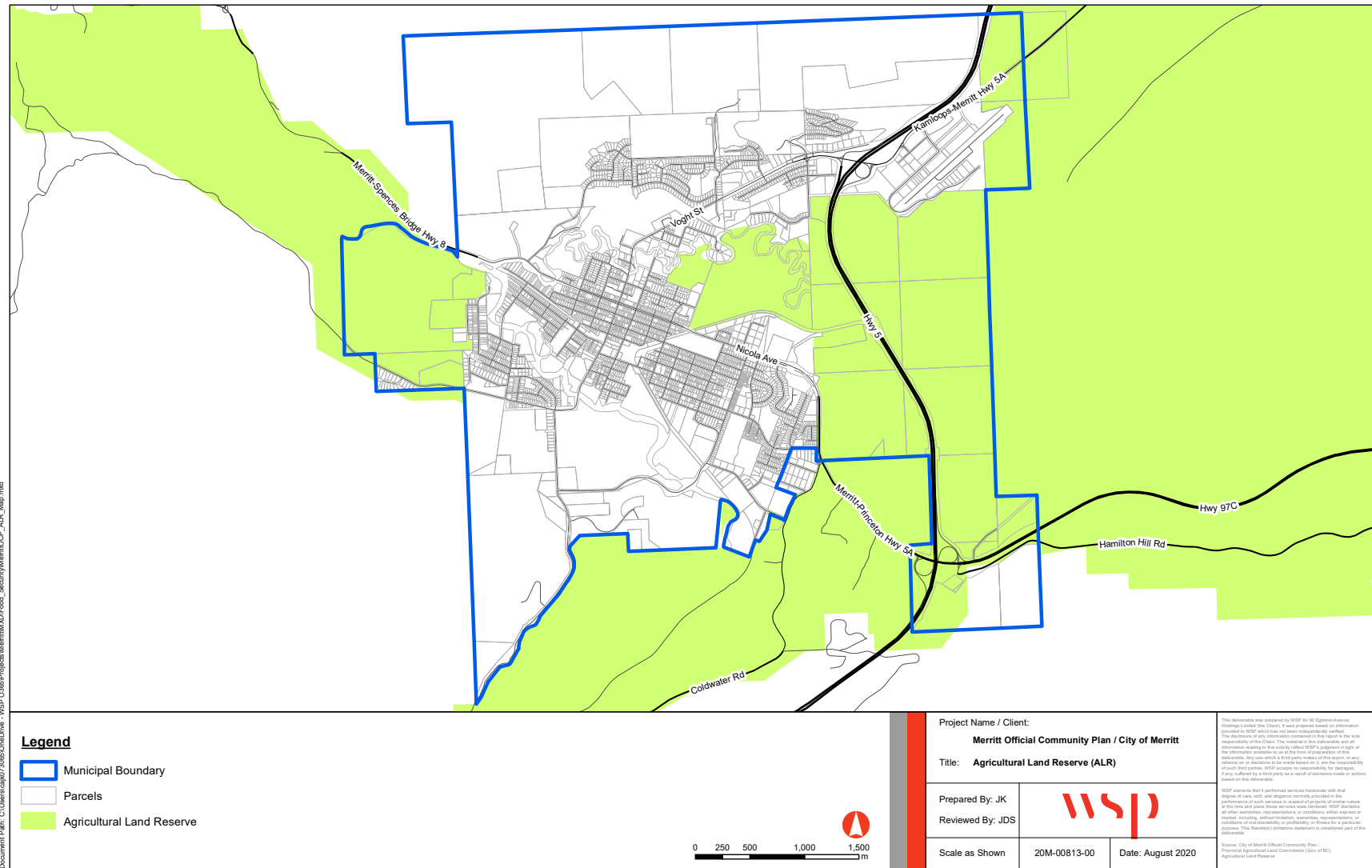


Figure 4: ALR within Boundaries of City of Merritt

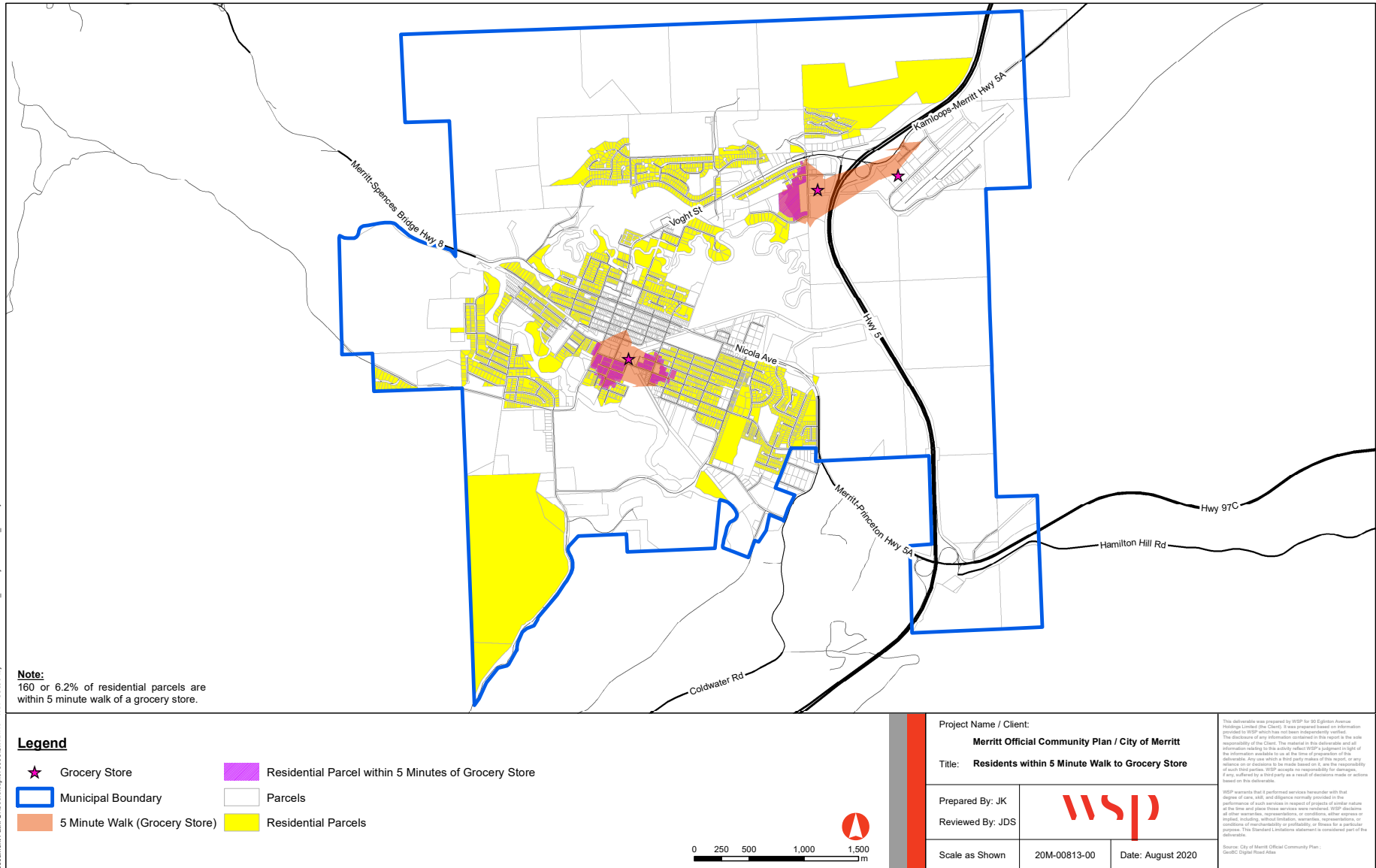


Figure 5: Analysis of walkable access to main grocery store
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Demographics and community health information

Population

According to the 2016 Census, there are 7,139 people living in Merritt. According to BC Stats in 2020, this number has increased to 7,722 people.

Age

Similar to many communities in BC and Canada, the vast majority of people are over the age of 15 and the largest age group is between 55 and 59 years old. The average age of people in Merritt is 46 years and the average life expectancy is four years below the provincial average at 78.4 years.

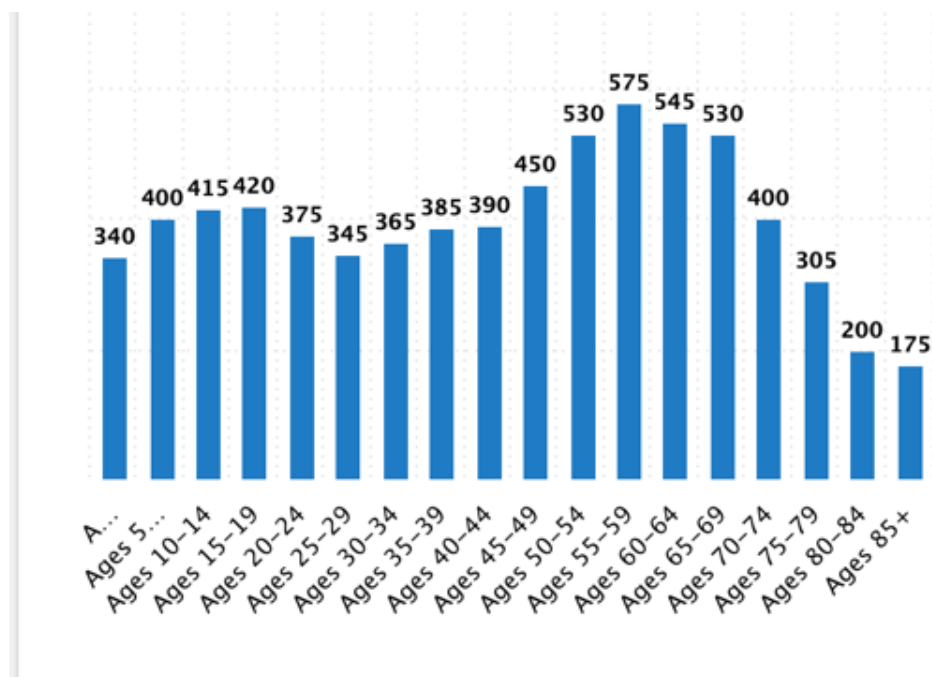


Figure 6: Ages of people in Merritt. Source- Statistics Canada 2016

Seniors often face economic challenges and many can experience household food insecurity. With an aging population in Merritt consideration of how to enable seniors to be food secure is an important consideration. The City of Merritt Housing Needs Report indicates that the proportion of seniors in the community is expected to grow.¹⁵

Income

Average income in Merritt is 17% lower than the rest of the province at \$ 74,977. With 35% more than the BC average of homeowners in Merritt spending more than 30% of household

¹⁵ www.merritt.ca/hnr

income on housing coupled with 42% more unemployment in Merritt as compared to the rest of the province, food insecurity is likely a significant challenge facing many residents.¹⁶

Health

As in most communities in BC, Food related illnesses such as some cancers, heart disease, and diabetes affect people in Merritt. Mental health also impacts people in Merritt and their ability to be food secure. Health indicators for Interior Health region are lower than in the rest of the province. This indicates residents are experiencing higher than normal challenges with chronic disease and vulnerability in early childhood (including diabetes and heart failure).¹⁷ Also within the interior health region, school-aged children who eat 5 or more servings of fruit and vegetables is less than the provincial average with the exception of grade 3-4, who eat 14% more produce than the provincial average.

Language

According to the 2016 Census, most people in Merritt speak English as a first or second language. There are also many people (570) who speak other languages with Punjabi in particular being spoken by many people (235). Other languages are also spoken by Merritt residents including German (75 people), Tagalog (35 people), Spanish (30 people).

Food bank use

According to a recent Vancouver Sun article, the use of the Nicola Valley Food Bank has increased 75% over the last year.¹⁸

¹⁶ Merritt Community Health Profile. Accessed Aug 4, 2020:

<http://communityhealth.phsa.ca/HealthProfiles/HealthReportHealthStatusAndChronicDisease/Merritt>

¹⁷ Merritt Community Health Profile. Accessed Aug 4, 2020:

<http://communityhealth.phsa.ca/HealthProfiles/HealthReportComparisonToBC/Merritt>

¹⁸ <https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/indigenous-teen-overcomes-past-and-raises-5000-for-local-food-bank-with-ultra-marathon->

Existing approach to food security in Merritt's Zoning Bylaw

There are already provisions within the City of Merritt Zoning Bylaw (ZBL) to enable residents to grow their own. In Merritt, backyard hens and bees are permitted in R1, R1A, R2 and R3 residential zones (Proposed ZBL No. 2284, 2020). The Animal Control Bylaw¹⁹ provides regulation of these permitted uses.

Urban Agriculture is defined in the ZBL and is a secondary permitted use in Single Family Residential (R1), Low Density Residential (R2), Small Parcel residential (R3), Large parcel Residential (R1A), Institutional and Public Use (P2), Post-Secondary Educational (P3). Greenhouse agriculture is permitted in Light and Heavy Industrial (M1, M2) zones. The ZBL defines urban agriculture as:

AGRICULTURE, URBAN means the cultivation of a portion of a Parcel for the personal or commercial production of food for human consumption only, including but not limited to eggs, fruits, honey, herbs, nuts, and vegetables. Activities that cause a Nuisance are prohibited. This Use includes Backyard Hens and Beekeeping, but excludes fur bearing animals or other livestock and fungi.

The ZBL defines agriculture and agriculture greenhouse as:

AGRICULTURAL USE means the indoor or outdoor growing, rearing, producing, harvesting, or sale of agricultural crops, fur bearing animals, poultry or other livestock, and includes processing of primary agricultural products harvested, reared or produced by the farming operation, and the storage of farm machinery implements and agricultural supplies, and repairs to farm machinery and implements used by the farming operation.

AGRICULTURE, GREENHOUSE means the indoor growing, producing, harvesting, or wholesale of agricultural crops, and includes processing and packaging of products harvested or produced by the farming operation, and the storage of farm machinery implements and agricultural supplies, and repairs to farm machinery and implements used by the farming operation, but excludes fur bearing animals, poultry or other livestock, and fungi.

¹⁹ https://www.merritt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/bylaws/2241_animal_control.pdf

3. Food Assets in Merritt

There are many food assets in Merritt. The categories of food assets from the above section have been customized to be relevant to Merritt. An inventory of physical food assets is included in Appendix 1. Some food security assets are not only physical but can also include knowledge, relationships, programs, culture, and local economics. These food assets in Merritt include but are not limited to:

- Merritt's location in a historic ranching and agricultural area
- School meal and backpack programs, including extended service during pandemic
- Food skills and knowledge of residents
- Nicola Valley Farmers Markets that offers the BC Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- Nicola Valley Community Gardens
- Nicola Valley Food Bank
- Community Support Programs (e.g. Community Inclusion, Safe Spaces, and the Family Service Program)
- Local butchers and bakers
- Backyard gardening
- Farmland within the town boundaries

Table 4 below provides an estimate of the type and number of physical food assets in Merritt.

Table 3: Physical Food Assets in Merritt

Physical Food Assets	# in Merritt
Bakery	1
Breweries/Cidery	2
Butchers	2
Community Gardens	2+
In town farms (AR1 zone)	2
Regional farms	28+
Farmers markets	1
Food banks	1
Garden Centres	2
Grocery Store	6
Programs that could include healthy food	9
Post-secondary culinary arts programs	1
Restaurants and cafes	29

4. Estimating Self-Sufficiency in Merritt

Estimating self-sufficiency is not intended to suggest that farmers and ranchers produce a specific mix of products, distributed exclusively within the region. Rather, estimating self-sufficiency provides an estimate of the theoretical potential for the land base to feed the local population. This can help to set realistic targets and clear metrics for tracking progress.

In 2006, the BC Ministry of Agriculture produced BC's Food Self Reliance Study. The report included a model to measure food self-sufficiency within BC communities. The model estimates that 0.524 ha of land (irrigated and non-irrigated) is required to produce an adequate and healthy diet for one person to live for one year in BC.

This model can be used in conjunction with population statistics and other data to estimate the number of people that Merritt's agricultural land base could feed if the system was completely localized (i.e. if all food produced in and around Merritt was consumed in the Boundary). The model is a high level estimation but is useful in providing an indication of potential self-sufficiency.

The BC Ministry of Agriculture estimates that 0.524 ha of land (irrigated and non-irrigated) is required to produce an adequate and healthy diet for one person to live for one year in BC. Merritt's 2020 population is estimated at 7,722²⁰ people. Using these figures, there would need to be 4,046 ha (9998 ac) under production (with the potential to be irrigated) to be food self-sufficient. This would assume that all food being produced would remain within the region for local consumption.

In addition to agriculturally zoned land in the agricultural land reserve, there is also potential growing spaces in rural and urban residential areas. As shown in Table 5, there are other areas in addition to the ALR that permit and are suitable for agriculture purposes. Currently this analysis includes only an estimation of back and front yard space in addition to AR-1. However many other zones in Merritt also permit agricultural activities i.e. R1, R1-A, R2, R3, R4, R5, R7, R8, P1, P2, P3. These zones have not been included at this time. After combining AR-1 and an estimation of area of back and front yards in residential areas, 339 ha is theoretically available for some form of agriculture activity. Table 5 summarizes these area calculations.

²⁰ BC Stats (2020)

Table 4: Area Calculations for Zones that Support Agriculture in Merritt

Zone	Total Area		Theoretically available land*	
	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Hectares</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Hectares</i>
AR-1	1580	640	474	320
Back and front yards	157	63	47	19
Total	1736	703	521	339
* Estimate based on subtracting 50% of the total area of AR-1 and 70% of back and front yards to account for roads, buildings, setbacks and other uses other than primary agriculture and backyard garden space.				

When combined with the Ministry of Agriculture estimate of how much land is required for one person for one year, the theoretical maximum level of self-sufficiency in Merritt is estimated at 8%. That is, under maximum agriculture conditions, the City of Merritt proper has the land base to meet up to 8% of its community food needs. If regional agricultural lands were also considered, this percentage would be significantly higher, potentially exceeding 100%. If the 13,500 Nicola regional residents were included, but regional land excluded, this number would be lower at 3%.

This indicates that regional, provincial, and national food systems are likely to remain an essential resource for food security in Merritt, but that there is also potential to increase the level of self-sufficiency at the household to the regional level. Table 6 provide the data and calculations used.

Table 5: Theoretical Maximum Level of Food Self-Sufficiency Estimated for Merritt

	Merritt Only	TNRD Only	TNRD + Merritt
Population	7,722people	13,500people	21,222 people
Land for one person for one year	0.524ha (1.3 ac)		
Estimated amount of land required to be self-sufficient.	4,046ha (9,998 ac)	7074 ha (17,430 ac)	11,200 ha (27,478 ac)
Total amount of land available for some form of agriculture	339ha (521 ac)	483,371 ha ²¹ (1,194,435 ac)	483,710 ha (1,195,273 ac)
Theoretical maximum level of food self-sufficiency	8%	>100%	>100%

²¹ <http://www.investthompsonnicolabc.ca/sectors/agriculture>. Accessed March 29, 2021

5. Key Issues and Opportunities for Food Security in Merritt

Through this process the project team interviewed six key players in Merritt including School District 58 Nicola-Similkameen, Nicola Valley Food Bank, Nicola Valley Farmers Market, Interior Health, City of Merritt Public Works, Recreation and Facilities, and Planning staff. A small group workshop/webinar was hosted that was attended by City elected officials and staff, Ask Wellness Society, Community Futures, Society, School District 58, Interior Health, and the Nicola Valley Food Bank. Please see Appendix 4 for a full summary of the outcomes of this session. Food security was also integrated into an on-line public survey. Please see appendix 5 for excerpts. The findings of all of these engagement points are integrated into the key issues and opportunities identified below.

Key Issues

Food will not solve hunger. The drivers of household food insecurity are largely systemic and there are many factors impacting food security at the household and community levels. Some issues are created by factors such as state of the economy, climate change, and level of economic opportunity in a community, while other issues are influenced by more local factors such as food processing capacity and food gardening skills. Potential key issues in Merritt include but are not limited to:

- Household food security
 - There are many people in Merritt who are dealing with chronic household food insecurity
 - Poverty, unemployment and low income
 - Lack of walking distance to a grocery store
 - A lack of affordable housing and/or job opportunities that provide the disposable income needed to buy food
 - COVID and added pressure on food banks and other front line services
 - Need for strategic planning and new facilities for emergency food providers
 - Stigmatization of poverty, mental health, addiction
- Community food security
 - Lack of food skills for healthy and year round enjoyment of local food
 - Increased costs for farmers and independent local food businesses
 - Lack of places for youth to hang out
 - Increased risk of natural and market emergencies
 - Lack of food storage and processing infrastructure
 - Climate change impacts on agriculture
 - Water demand for increasing market gardening and agriculture in the region
 - Lack of coordination of food security actors in Merritt
 - Agriculture products like beef that are raised in the region are not available for sale in Merritt

Key Opportunities

- Policy and land use
 - Include food security and poverty reduction in the vision and policies for the OCP and future plan for land, infrastructure, housing etc.
 - Consider food and agriculture security in downtown revitalization, economic development, housing strategies and poverty reduction strategies
 - Preserve agricultural land for community food security
 - Support regional agriculture planning activities
- Economy
 - Grow the local food and agriculture economy
 - Allow farm stands and food sharing
 - Support regional food and agriculture planning/ sector development
 - Promote and market of local food business
 - Establish an agricultural hub with cut and wrap facilities, staff butcher, grain silos, bulk orders on feed, fertilizer, seed, docking station for mobile abattoir, among other facilities and services
- Poverty Reduction
 - Reduce poverty, destigmatize poverty
 - Pursue affordable housing options for seniors, families, individuals (rental and ownership)
- Education
 - Learn about indigenous food sovereignty and history of indigenous food systems
 - Provide education on food skills as well as other topics such as tenant rights
 - Encourage backyard gardening, urban agriculture and edible landscaping
 - Implement local food gardening demonstrations
 - Encourage and require Low water use gardening
- Public indoor and outdoor spaces and facilities
 - Support 7 day per week services, e.g. food programs, transportation,
 - Work with youth and others to identify spaces and supports
 - Work with Food trucks and farmers markets to ensure adequate supports are in place e.g. Signage, parking, vending areas, washrooms, equipment storage, covered areas.
- Community and commercial food infrastructure
 - Support providing transportation options after 10:00 pm
 - Establish community cold storage areas
 - Shared kitchen space (community and enterprise)
Determine level of demand for new community gardens
 - Examine possibilities for using City facilities
- Collaboration
 - Support local food champions
 - Build food culture

- Plan for emergency preparedness and recovery
- Plan for climate change adaptation in food and agriculture
- Advocate for poverty reduction and food security
- Enable food sharing/exchanges

6. Food Security Recommendations for the OCP

These recommendations are based on the research and engagement outcomes summarized in the above sections. Further input into developing this content will occur as part of the overall OCP process. This policy set considers both household and community food security responses.

A Food Secure Merritt

Merritt has many food assets, including being located in a rich agricultural area and having strong community values around caring for each other. However, like numerous communities in BC, many people in Merritt experience food insecurity, which can lead to a range of health issues. Additionally, the city as a whole faces challenges to community food security, often associated with factors such as climate change, emergencies, disruptions in value chains, and inhospitable environments for small to medium scale enterprise, to name a few. This policy set outlines strategic ways the City of Merritt can take an active role in creating a Food Secure Merritt.

City of Merritt Food Security Goal

To increase levels of household and community food security in Merritt.

Food Security Objectives, Policies and Implementation Ideas

Objective 1: Integrate food security into municipal social planning frameworks and activities

Policy 1.1 Work with social service organizations to find ways to support community food security and antipoverty activities.

Implementation ideas for Policy 1.1 include:

- *Consider designating a staff point-person for food security*
- *Work with the Food Bank and other social service providers to identify new land and facilities,*
- *Support grant writing through providing letters of recommendation, where appropriate.*
- *Consider establishing a food security advisory that includes membership from local organizations throughout the food system.*

Policy 1.2 Foster a community of caring and being nice to others.

Implementation ideas for Policy 1.2 include:

- *Develop and/or work with food security and anti-poverty organizations to develop communication material and campaigns on destigmatizing low income and poverty.*
- *Provide training modules to staff and council on raising awareness of food security, anti-poverty, and anti-racism.*

- *Find ways to celebrate diversity and equity in Merritt. Consider using resources such as the Equity Action Guide published by the Public Health Agency of BC.²²*

Policy 1.3 Consider developing an affordable housing strategy that identifies the ways the City of Merritt can have impact.

Implementation ideas for Policy 1.3

- *Work with key players to define housing affordability and undertake an affordable housing strategy.*
- *Use visual preference surveys to determine housing types suitable for Merritt.*
- *Identify funding sources, such as CMHC, to support the construction of affordable housing.*

Objective 2: Grow the local food and agriculture economy in Merritt

Policy 2.1 Ensure community and commercial direct marketing opportunities are a supported use in Merritt

Implementation ideas for Policy 2.1 include:

- *Work with Farmers Market organizers to ensure farmers markets have suitable locations and supports such as seating areas, signage, public washrooms, water fountains, parking, shade, and covered areas for vendors to operate in inclement conditions.*
- *Allow farm-gate and yard-gate stands to enable residents to share and/or sell surplus produce/ consider controlling through design guidelines.*

Policy 2.2. Work with producer organizations and food businesses to determine the need for, and level of interest in, establishing shared resources such as food and agriculture product storage, processing, sales, and distribution.

Implementation ideas for 2.2 include:

- *Identify the feasibility reprogramming existing municipally-owned spaces and food assets create shared assets such as a commercial processing kitchen (large to micro), cold storage and retail spaces.*
- *Convene a meeting with key players to discuss the top priorities for growing the food and agriculture economy in and around Merritt.*
- *Integrate food businesses and place-making through food in the downtown revitalization plan.*

²² https://planh.ca/sites/default/files/equity_action_guide.pdf

Objective 3: Address food security in land use planning

Policy 3.1 Consider adding indoor growing and rooftop farming as permitted uses in the M1 and M2 zones.

Implementation ideas for 3.1 include:

- *Inventory the areas that could be suitable for indoor and rooftop farming.*
- *Consider servicing requirements, rooftop safety requirements, guidelines for new construction that incorporates green roofs and indoor growing.*
- *Consider clarifying the Accessory Building language in the Zoning Bylaw to indicate that small backyard greenhouses are permitted. Consider*
- *Consider developing educational material to help explain what food system activities are permitted in what areas.*

Policy 3.3 Plan for residential areas to be near to commercial areas that include grocery stores, or along transit and cycle routes to ensure access to grocery stores.

Implementation ideas for 3.3 includes:

- *Review the Mobile Food Concession Business Regulation Bylaw and incorporate food truck related regulations into the Business License Bylaw.*
- *Increase walkable and bikeable access to grocery stores by encouraging healthy food stores to be located in residential areas that do not currently have walkable access to a major grocery store.*

Objective 4: Shift municipal purchasing and operations to incorporate local food

Policy 4.1 Consider developing restorative landscaping guidelines that includes edible plants and perennials, pollinator gardens, and low-water food garden demonstrations.

Implementation ideas for 4.1 include:

- *Connect with Indigenous knowledge keepers to learn about the food plants traditionally harvested by First Nation people. In collaboration, consider establishing medicinal gardens and plants with signage describing the cultural significance of the plants.*
- *Hold an operational staff workshop to identify the best ways to adopt landscaping guidelines into operations.*
- *Consider community requests for land, soil, and water hook-ups for establishing community gardens as well as teaching and demonstration gardens on public land.*

Policy 4.2 Explore the opportunity to create a “local first” purchasing policy for local food.

Implementation ideas for 4.2 include:

- Consider setting targets for local food purchasing based on how much food is purchased for catering, concessions, and meal programs.

Objective 5: Advocate for a Food Secure Merritt

Policy 5.1 Explore the idea of establishing a guaranteed basic income and form an advocacy position that may be communicated to senior levels of government.

Implementation ideas for 5.1 include:

- *Consider endorsing a City of Merritt motion that endorses a guaranteed basic income for all Canadians.²³*
- *Working with other municipalities and regional districts, present a motion at UBCM that endorses a guaranteed basic income for all Canadians.*

Policy 5.2 Support regional food and agriculture planning.

Implementation ideas for 5.2 include:

- *Enquire about the timeline for a regional food and agriculture strategy to be developed by the RD.*
- *Work with the Regional District, producer and processor associations, and others to identify and address common issues such as water use and conservation, adapting to climate change, emergency preparedness and recovery, and vitality of the food and agriculture sector in the region.*

²³ Please see example guaranteed basic income motion passed by the City of Kingston 2015:
https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/bicn/pages/164/attachments/original/1451911528/151215_City_of_Kingston_resolution__453435_.pdf?1451911528

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Food Assets in Merritt

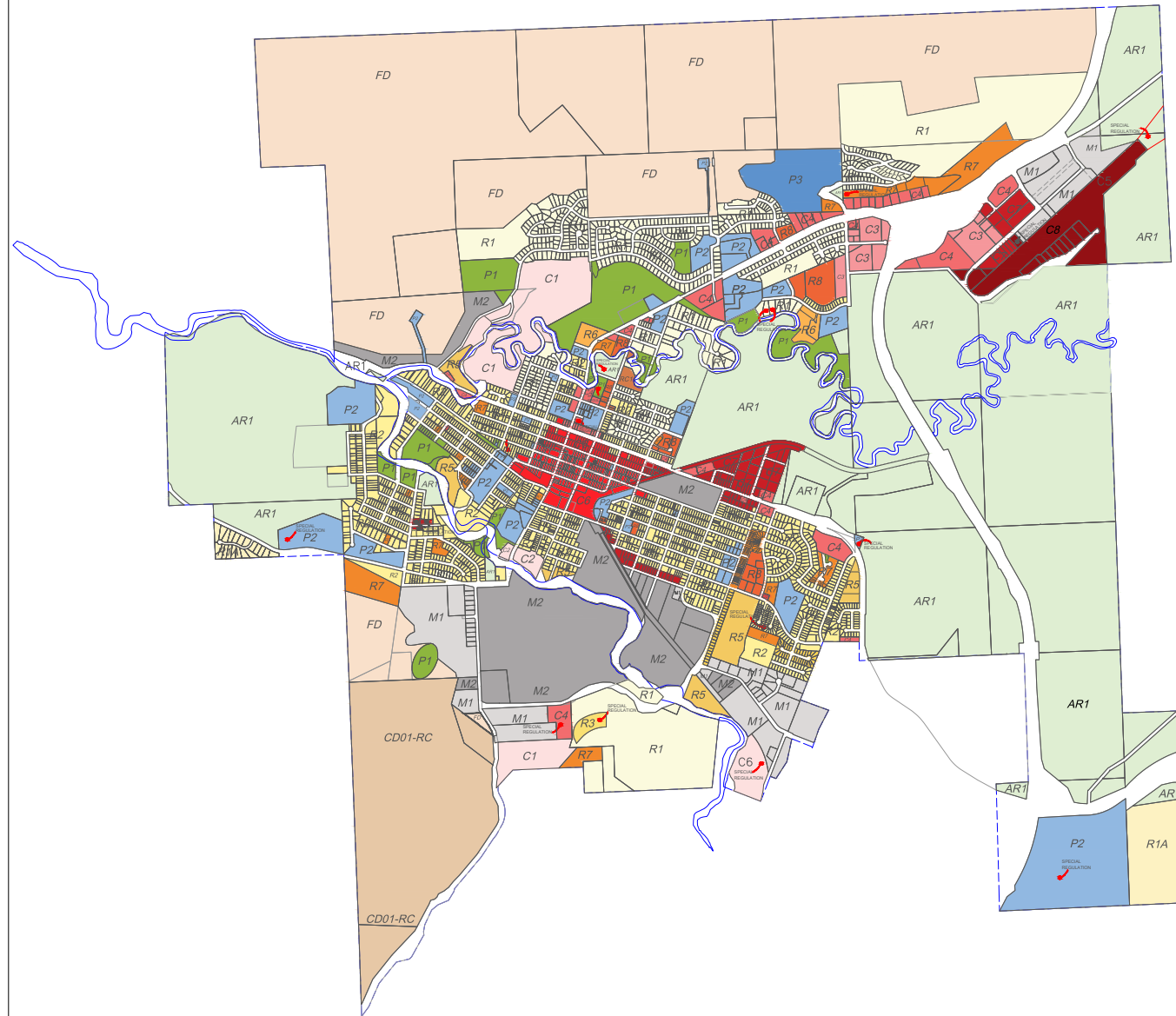
The table below provides a list of food assets in Merritt. More detailed inventory work is required to ensure all of the regional food assets such as farms and ranches are included.

Food Asset	Name
Bakery	Brambles Bakery and Café
Brewery	Empty Keg Brew House Ltd.
Cidery	Left Field Cider Company
Butcher	The Local Butcher
	Nicola Valley Meats
Community gardens	Nicola Valley Community Gardens and others operating gardens at the hospital, Spirit Square and the high school. The Merritt Library has been approved for grant funding to implement a community garden
Farm within town boundaries	River Ranch
	Avanlee Farm
Farmers markets	Nicola Valley Farmers Market
	Farmers market coupon program
Food banks and meal programs	Nicola Valley and District Food Bank
Garden centres	Walmart Garden Centre
	Purity Feed Co
Grocery store	Save on Foods
	Extra Foods
	Walmart Supercentre
	Bobs Mini Mart
	Treehouse Health Foods Inc
	Coldwater Corner Market
Programs that could include healthy food	Caring Dads
	Community Inclusion
	Children and Youth with Special Needs
	Safe Spaces
	Teen Centre
	Family Preservation Program
	Youth Justice- Case Aid
	Family Service Program

Food Asset	Name
Local Post Secondary	Nicola Valley Institute of Technology Culinary Arts program
Regional farms	Millers Farm
	Baird Cattle Co.
	Cattle Lower Nicola
	Nicola Valley Apiaries
	Chutter Ranch Ltd.
	Tusjast Icelandic Horse Farm
	Rey Creek Ranch
	Spius Creek Hatchery
	Nicola Ranch
	Iron Mountain Ranch
	3 Bar Farm
	Winsome Meadows
	Can A Mex Farms
	Blue Sky Ranch
	Douglas Lake Ranch
	Clapperton Ranch
	Little Beaver Ranch
	AP Guest Ranch
	Coldwater Ranch
	Dot Ranch
	Guichon Ranch
	Iron Mountain Ranch
	Kuiper Ranch (Nicola Valley Meats)
	Lazy L Ranch
	Lindley Creek Ranch
	Pentangle V Ranch
	Pooley Ranch
	Stump Lake Ranch
Restaurants and cafes	Kekuli Café Coffee and Bannock
	Mongos- Mongolian Grill
	Home Restaurant
	Mughal Garden
	Dairy Queen
	Whitespot
	Coldwater Café

Food Asset	Name
	Mary Browns Chicken and Taters
	Yaki Joes Pizza
	Canada Café
	Panago Pizza
	Grand Pub and Grill
	A &W
	Garden Sushi
	New Town Sushi
	Roaster Barn
	Boston Pizza
	Subway
	Burger King
	McDonalds
	Bamboo Panda
	Game on Sports Bar and Grill
	Denny's
	Nanas Hitch'n Post Restaurant
	Crystal Gardens Chinese Restaurant
	Mandolin's Bagel & Coffeehouse
	Superior Pizza
	Pizza Pizza
	Tim Horton's

Appendix 2: Schedule A: Merritt Zoning Map



LEGEND

Agricultural

AR1
Agricultural

Residential

R1 Single Family Residential
R1a Large Parcel Residential
R2 Low Density Residential
R3 Small Parcel Residential
R4 Residential Modular Home
R5 Mobile Home Park
R6 Strata Parcel Residential
R7 Medium Density Residential
R8 High Density Residential
RC1 Residential Care Housing

Commercial

C1 Recreational Commercial
C2 Town Commercial
C3 Regional Commercial
C4 Centre Commercial
C5 Neighbourhood Commercial
C6 City Centre District
C7 Service Commercial
C8 Airport Commercial

Industrial

M1 Light Industrial
M2 Heavy Industrial

Institutional

P1 Parks & Cemetery
P2 Institutional & Public Use
P3 Post Secondary Educational

Special Use

FD Future Development
CD01-RC Comprehensive Development

AMENDMENTS

BYLAW No.	AMENDMENTS	DATE	BYLAW No.	AMENDMENTS	DATE

SCHEDULE A
BYLAW No. 2284, 2020
AS ADOPTED, 2020

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

LINDA A. BROWN, MAYOR

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

SEAN SMITH, CAO

Merritt
FLOURISH UNDER THE SUN

OFFICIAL ZONING MAP
SCHEDULE A
CONSOLIDATED FOR CONVENIENCE ONLY

Appendix 3: Merritt Backyard Hens and Beekeeping Bylaws

Excerpt from Merritt Zoning Bylaw No. 2284, 2020

4.37 Backyard Hens

- 4.37.1 Backyard Hens are restricted to Parcels in the R1, R1A, R2 and R3 zones.
- 4.37.2 Backyard Hens must be kept in a Backyard Hen Enclosure. Only one Structure containing Backyard Hens is permitted on each property.
- 4.37.3 The Backyard Hen enclosure must be sited to the rear of the Principal Building, be Setback a minimum of 1.2 metres from any Parcel Line, not be visible from the street, and be constructed in a way to prevent infiltration from predatory animals and rodents as well as for sound attenuation.

See the Animal Control Bylaw for regulations on the keeping of animals.

4.38 Beekeeping

- 4.38.1 Written consent from owners and tenants of all Abutting properties and, if applicable, the subject property owner, must be obtained and provided to the City. Neighbours may only object to the keeping of beehives on medical grounds.
- 4.38.2 Bees may only be kept on Parcels zoned R1, R1A, R2 or R3.
- 4.38.3 No more than 2 beehives on a Parcel of less than 1,000 m², 4 beehives on a Parcel that is between 1,000 m² and 2,000 m², and 6 beehives on a Parcel that is over 2,000 m².
- 4.38.4 All beehives must be located in a rear yard and oriented to face away from adjacent properties and Lanes.
- 4.38.5 Beehives have Interior Side, Exterior Side and Rear Setbacks of 2.0 metres.
- 4.38.6 The positioning of all beehives must enable a clear flight path of at least 4.5 metres straight ahead from the front of the beehive to any Parcel Line or Structure.
- 4.38.7 Beehives must be screened from view from any street, Lane or Abutting residential property.

See the Animal Control Bylaw for regulations on the keeping of animals.

Appendix 4: Small Group Workshop Findings Summary

What We Heard

Poverty Reduction and Food Security Stakeholder Workshop

City of Merritt OCP

Oct 29, 2020

Workshop date and time:

October 9, 3:00-5:00 pm by Zoom

Participants:

Bronwyn Coyne	Public Health Dietitian Coordinator	Interior Health
Derlanda Hewton	Executive Director	Nicola Valley Food Bank
Fran Delaney	Financial Services Coordinator	Community Futures
Jane Kempston	Early Learning & Literacy	School District 58
Keri Cooke	Director	Ask Wellness Society
Mayor Linda Brown	Mayor	City of Merritt
Steve McNiven	Super Intendant	School District 58

Project team members:

Brittany Shewchuk	Planner	WSP
Chen Peng	Project Manager	WSP
Don McArthur	Planning & Development Manager	City of Merritt
Janine de la Salle	Food Security Lead	Urban Food Strategies
Lauren Lange	Poverty Reduction Lead	WSP

Q2: Who are you representing today? (i.e. community member, not-for-profit organization, City staff member, etc?)

 Mentimeter

Education	City council	health care
Not-for-profit (ASK Wellness Society) and Community Member	WSP	Member of consulting team
City staff	Education	Not for Profit

Discussion notes from Introductions, Questions 6 and 7:

- What do you think are the most important ways the OCP could address PR and FS?
What do you think the main directions should be? What specific actions are needed?

- Preserving agricultural land for community food security
- 'hard to imagine' what needs to happen
- Ask, 'what does that mum need'
- General observations
 - A lot of people need serviced but are not reaching out. Seniors have a hard time asking for help and often go with out
 - Timing with opioid and Covid- it's been mind-blowing the support that has happened.
 - The Community 'heart is in the right place' and there are great core values in Merritt
 - We need to be creative in delivery of services (e.g. adaptation to Covid and distribution to people's homes).
 - Food bank has taken steps to create a dignified environment for people to access emergency food. E.g. creating more of a store approach, recruiting and retaining good volunteers, managing increased volumes of food donations, purchase of coolers,
- Gaps/Needs/Challenges
 - Need for affordable housing
 - Seniors
 - Families
 - Individuals
 - Spectrum of supportive housing
 - Housing continuum
 - Rental
 - Youth spaces and supports are needed
 - We don't have daily access to support services, most agencies work M-F- need 7-day per week services
 - When programs are based on 'good behaviour' those that need supports the most may be excluded. Good behaviour is hard more many, even on a full stomach
 - Services in Merritt are accessed by communities beyond the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Merritt.
 - Transportation and expanded bus services are needed to better connect
 - Supports at schools are good but what about the weekends?
 - With a lack of rental housing many are living in run-down motels
 - Renters can't make demands for fear of the risk of eviction. Market is in landlords favour. Many buildings appear to be below basic standards
- Opportunities
 - Work with youth and others to speak for themselves and help identify the types of spaces and programs that would work
 - Make access to food and other resources 'seamless and shameless'
 - Create conditions to help people get what they need

- Destigmatizing poverty
- Need a universal approach and collectively be stronger
- Agencies like Community Futures help where they see a need. The organization is looking to identify needs in Merritt and focus on measurables
- Projects around kindness
- Education on tenant rights
- How to integrate kindness into the OCP.

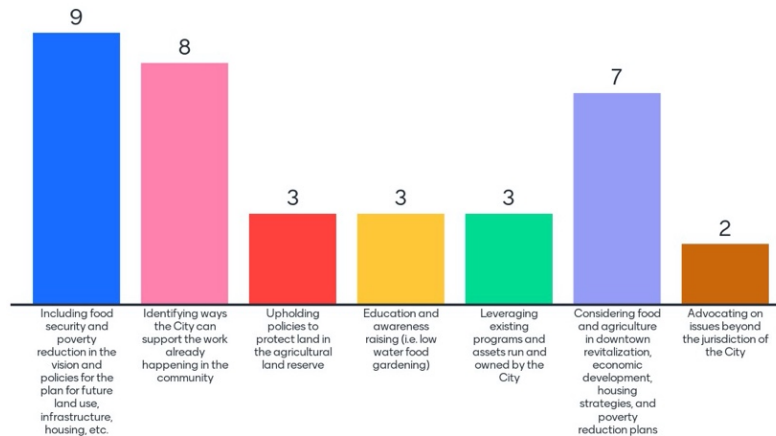
Mentimeter results to discussion questions 3, 4, 5, and 8

Q3: What are the most important ways you think the OCP could address poverty? Please score each below item out of 10 (where 10 is the most important)

Mentimeter



Q4: What do you think are the most important ways the OCP could address food security? (choose up to 4 of the below options)



9

Q5: What do you see as this future state of Merritt where poverty has been eliminated and food security & self-reliance has been stabilized?

More local food production. Food production where all can partake.

A community where everyone is taken care of, has their needs met, and are able to meet their highest potential.

I see a community that respects all, is much more positive in their outlook and takes care of each other.

Children coming to school healthy, rested, happy and excited to learn. Thriving.

People have many ways to access good quality food. People have safe and secure housing. People live with choice and dignity.

Youth, seniors, and all ages in between having judgement free inclusive access to abundant resources in Merritt.

A place where the stigma of "need" does not have to be hidden.

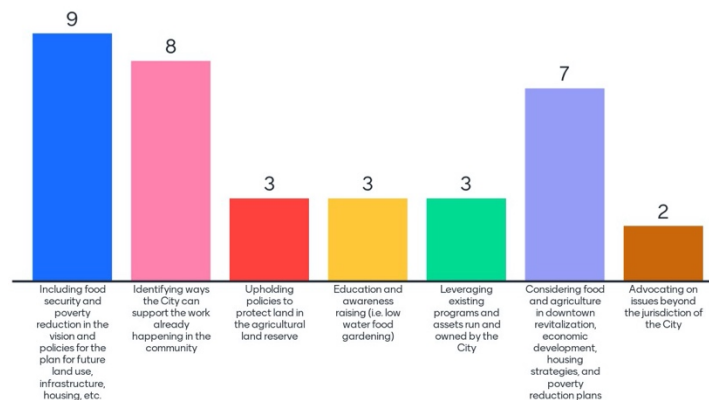
7

Q8: Please describe the one big move the City and community could make that would have the most positive impact for the most people.

More support to the local community group

Affordable Housing Strategy

Q4: What do you think are the most important ways the OCP could address food security? (choose up to 4 of the below options)



Interpretation and observation

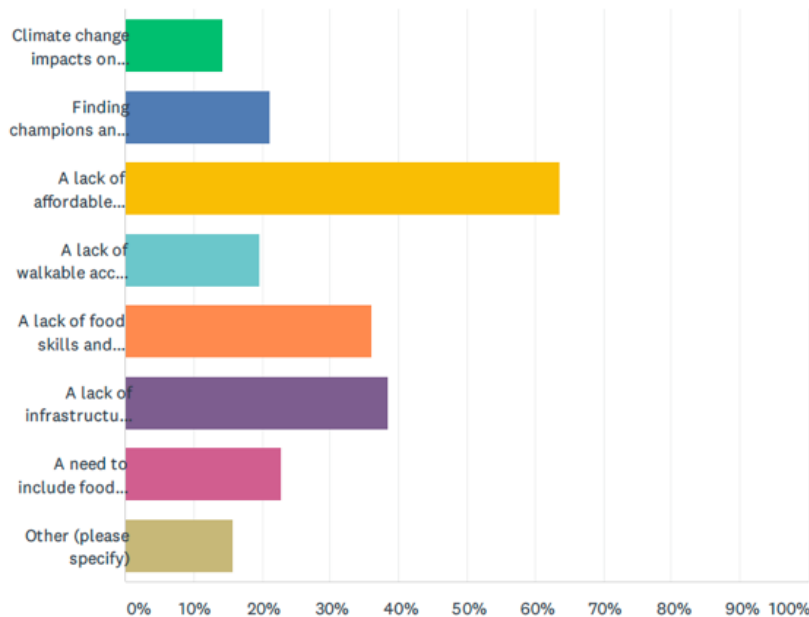
- There is a good degree of inter-agency collaboration in Merritt and many successes to build on
- There are many layers of poverty and food insecurity in Merritt
- Affordable housing is viewed as the top priority for reducing poverty and increasing household food security
- Including PR and FS in policies is viewed as very important
- The vision for reducing poverty and food security has been achieved includes:
 - Local food production
 - Thriving children and youth
 - Need is not viewed in a negative light

- A community where everyone is able to meet their highest potential
- Respect all
- Judgement free and inclusive access to abundant resources in Merritt
- A community that takes care of each other

Appendix 5: Food Security Survey Findings Excerpts

Q20 Some of Merritt's community members may experience food insecurity. Food security refers to having physical, social, and economic access to sufficient and nutritious foods at all times. In your opinion, what may be contributing to food insecurity in Merritt? Please select up to three of the following options

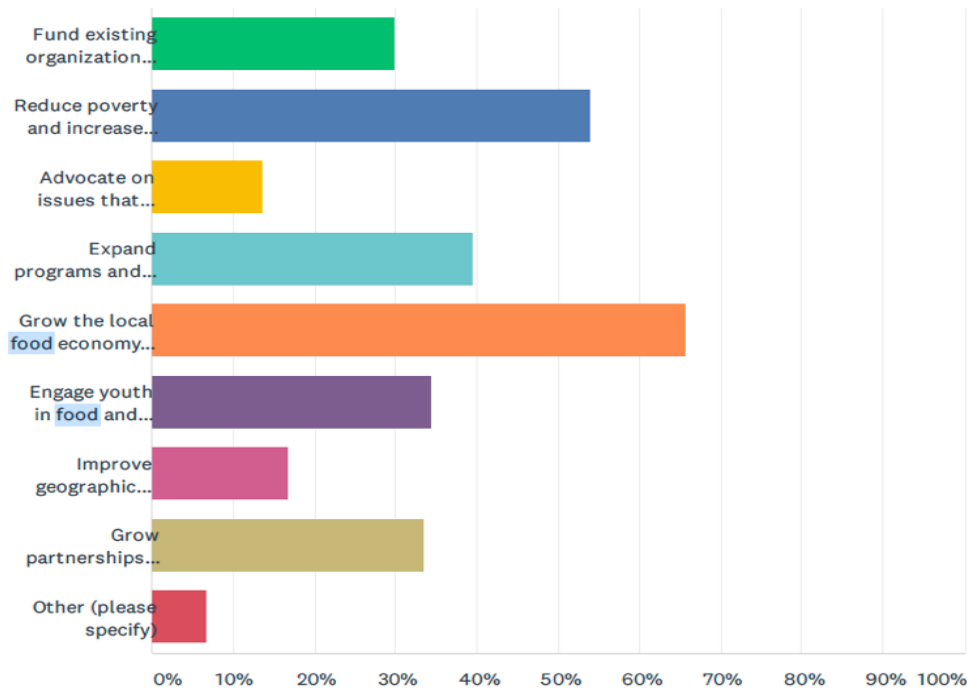
Answered: 280 Skipped: 57



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Climate change impacts on agriculture (e.g. more variability in weather and precipitation)	14.29%	40
Finding champions and resources to move food security projects forward	21.07%	59
A lack of affordable housing and/or job opportunities that provide the disposable income needed to buy food	63.57%	178
A lack of walkable access and transportation to healthy food sources (e.g. fresh produce, grains, dairy, protein)	19.64%	55
A lack of food skills and knowledge (e.g. food preparation and preservation)	36.07%	101
A lack of infrastructure to connect consumers and producers to local and regional foods	38.57%	108
A need to include food and agriculture in emergency preparedness and recovery	22.86%	64
Other (please specify)	15.71%	44
Total Respondents: 280		

Q21 In your opinion, what actions can help improve community and household food security in Merritt? Please select up to four of the following options

Answered: 280 Skipped: 57



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Fund existing organizations and activities involved in agriculture and food security	30.00% 84
Reduce poverty and increase housing affordability	53.93% 151
Advocate on issues that fall outside the jurisdiction of the City of Merritt (e.g. Regional agriculture planning, senior government policy, etc.)	13.57% 38
Expand programs and spaces for food and agriculture education, knowledge sharing, and skill building in food growing, preparation (shared commercial kitchen spaces), and preservation	39.64% 111
Grow the local food economy (i.e. connecting consumers and producers, regional branding, sector investments, community garden expansion, repurposing existing facilities for local food businesses, establishing a central agriculture facility to provide goods and services to farmers and ranchers)	65.71% 184
Engage youth in food and agriculture activities	34.29% 96
Improve geographic access to healthy food sources	16.79% 47
Grow partnerships between community, business, and local government	33.57% 94
Other (please specify)	6.79% 19

Total Respondents: 280