



Sept 16, 2023

From: the Everyone At the Table collective

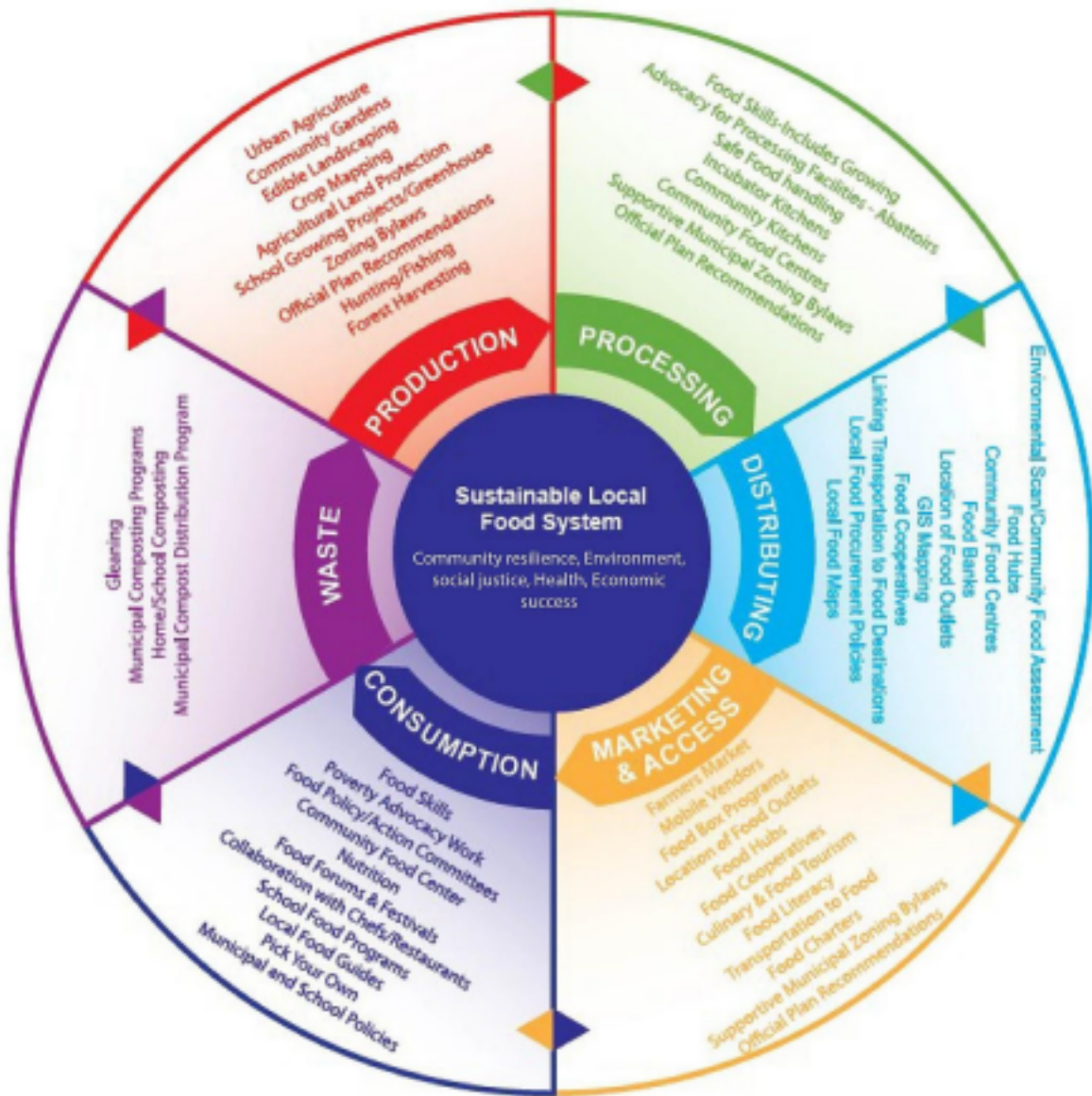
<https://www.letseatlocalpg.com/>

To our municipal elected officials,

As the time comes near for Council to meet to deliberate about the upcoming budget, we want to again express our support without reservations for Recycling & Environmental Action Planning Society (REAPS) in their application to the city for financial support for the REAPS Growing Knowledge Compost Community Garden Relocation and Expansion Project

The Everyone At the Table collective works to support local and regional food security and sovereignty. REAPS has been an invaluable partner in our work.

The graphic below best illustrates the mental image we have of a sustainable just local food system.



Modified from the Simcoe Muskoka Health Unit version

We share many of REAPS objectives and therefore fully endorse their work which nourished these objectives we share. We greatly appreciate that REAPS has been a champion of these shared objectives for decades. REAPS has continuously served our community for over 30 years, fostering public awareness and action through school programs, community workshops, and other educational initiatives. Since its beginning in 1993 with a Compost Demonstration Garden to showcase various types of indigenous plants and flowers, REAPS has gone on to teach local gardeners natural pest control techniques, organic gardening methods and how to use compost for maximum sustainability.

In spring 2021, the Everyone At the Table collective spearheaded an assessment of perceived local food security. The century-old proven most reliable approach to food security is the growing of family plots that sustain the family through the summer and can be processed for winter months. One of the gaps that was identified in that research is the need for mentoring of new gardeners (see report here <https://www.letseatlocalpg.com/finalreportthecityofpg>). Our community needs many teaching community gardens to contribute to fill that gap. We are enthusiastically in favour of our municipal taxes contributing to the financial support of the REAPS demonstration garden. We have found REAPS to be a steadfast, reliable, collaborative partner in all our projects. We trust they will deliver. They always do.

In summary, we are impressed with REAPS capacity to turn the challenge of a forced move into an opportunity and we look forward to supporting and participating to the best of our capacity. Making sure that REAPS has the space to continue the important work it has been doing and expanding it to fill a gardening and food literacy mentoring gap will strengthen our regional food security. We would be grateful for and appreciative of this investment in our community.

In solidarity,

Alex Rowan

For the Everyone At the Table collective

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*We wish to acknowledge the 9000+ years of the Lheidli T'enneh Nation's stewardship. The Lheidli T'enneh' ancestors have cared for this beautiful land that feeds us all and we will continue to welcome their teachings and ancestral knowledge as we work towards food security for all people.*