

# **Our Food Future & the Circular Economy**

**Thrive, PEC, March 2023**



# **Power of Our Food Systems:**

**Reshape our Economy**  
**Regenerate the Environment**  
**Resilient Communities**

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# Circular Food Systems have the power to change the world.

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Through the story of *Our Food  
Future* Guelph- Wellington's  
Circular Regional Food System  
Initiative



# Why Food?





# Food Systems & the Economy

Agriculture and agri-food system touches all Canadians and communities in Canada.

In 2020, it generated \$139.3 billion, accounting for 7.4% of Canada's gross domestic product (GDP)

It is responsible for 1 in 9 jobs across the country, employing ~ 2.1 million people.

# Food enables life itself

**After a good dinner one can forgive anybody, even one's own relatives.**

*Oscar Wilde*

**Food is not rational. Food is culture, habit, craving and identity.**

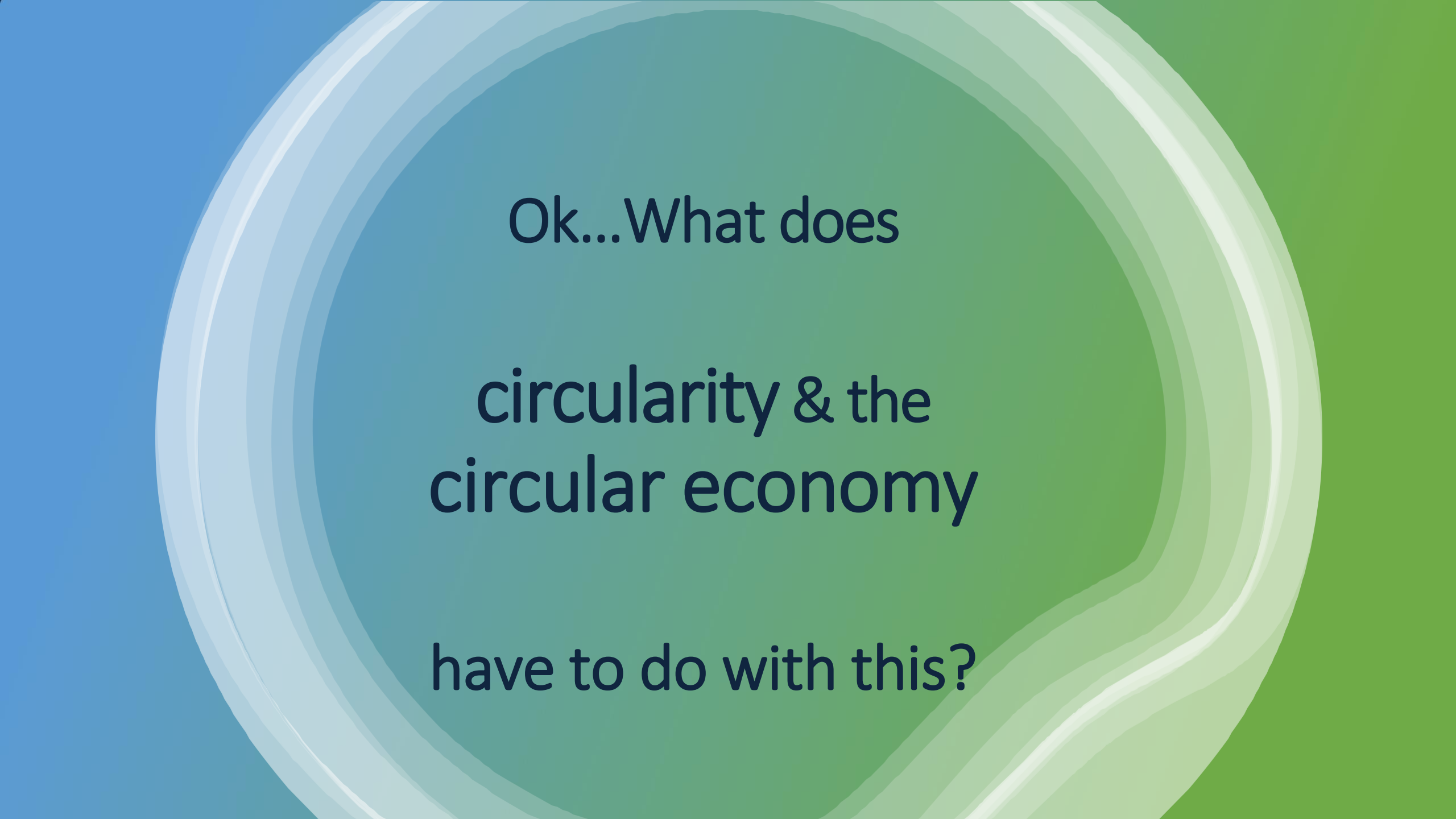
Jonathan Safran Foer

**Food is everything we are. ..your personal history, your province, your region, your tribe, your grandma.**

Anthony Bourdain

# How we grow, produce, distribute, consume food... impacts sustainability of communities & environment





Ok...What does  
circularity & the  
circular economy  
have to do with this?



# Linear to Circular Economy

<https://reimaginefood.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/What-is-the-CFE.mp4>

## LINEAR ECONOMY

take  
↓  
make  
↓  
use  
↓  
waste  
↓



## RECYCLING ECONOMY

take  
↓  
make  
↓  
use  
↓  
waste  
↓

recycle (blue arrow from waste to make)



## CIRCULAR ECONOMY

take  
↓  
make  
↓  
use  
↓

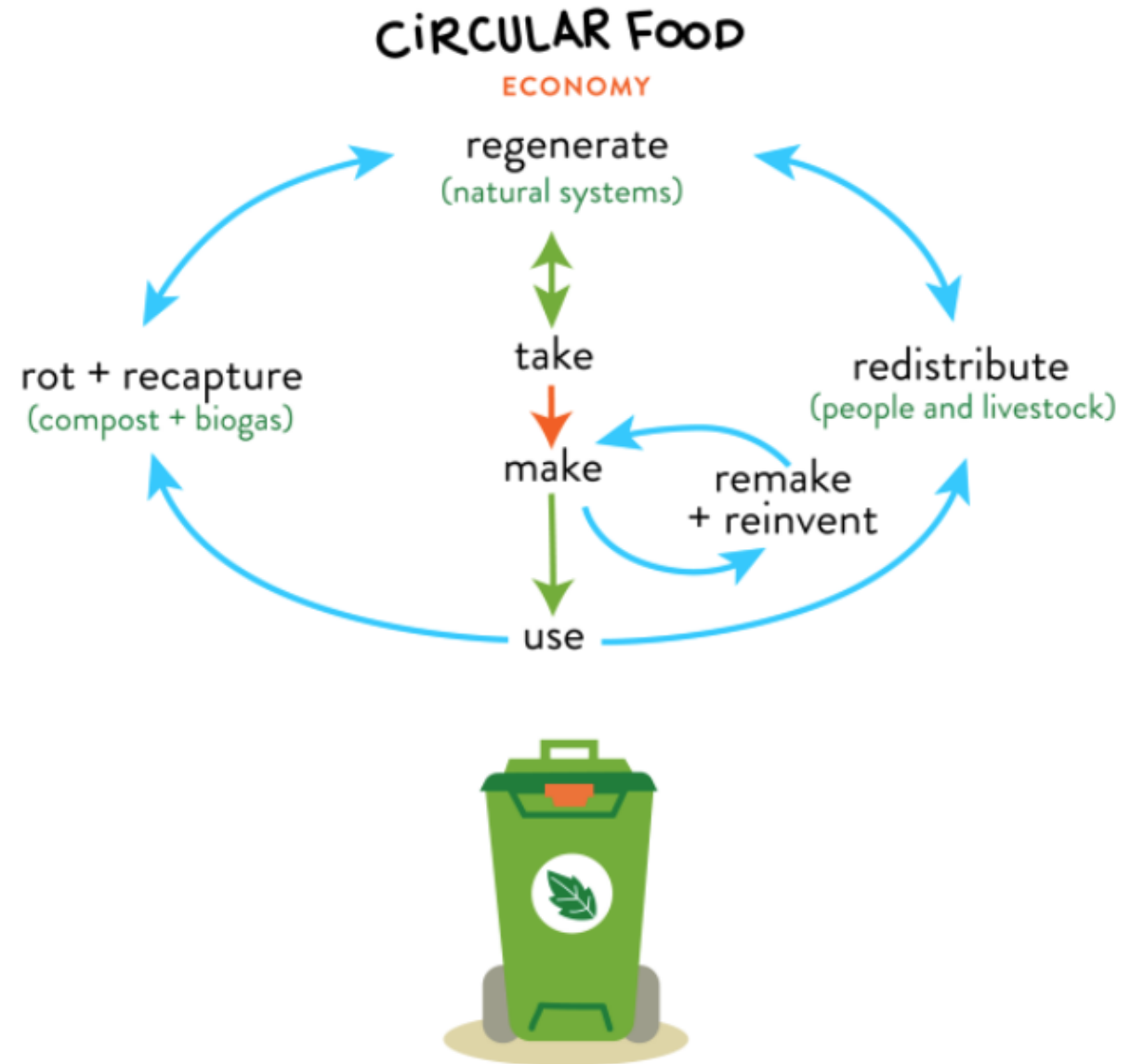
recycle (blue arrow from waste to make)  
return (blue arrow from use to make)  
reuse (green arrow from use to repair)  
repair (green arrow from repair to reuse)



# Linear to Circular Food Systems

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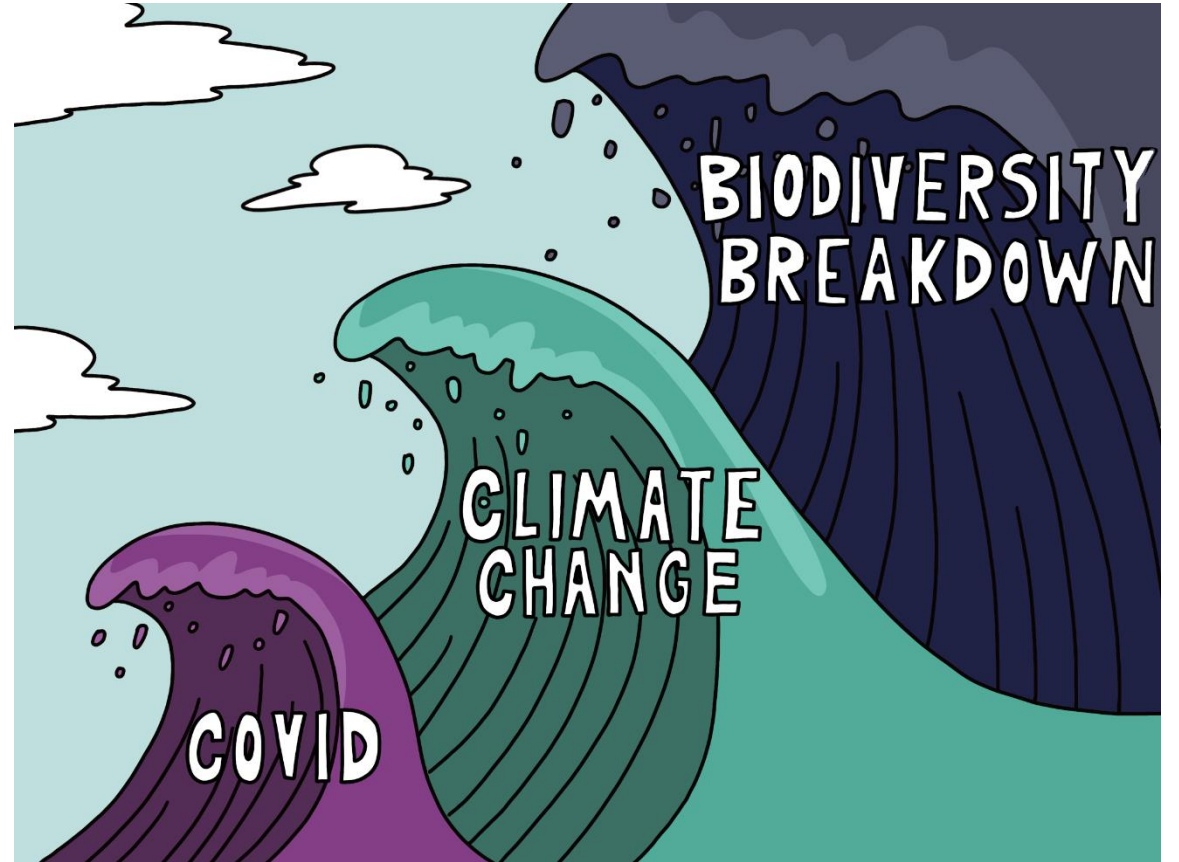
- Reimagine
- Regenerate
- Redistribute
- Reinvent
- Refuse




# Poly-crisis

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The circular economy is a **systems solution** framework that tackles global challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, waste, and pollution.





# The food system challenge



# Linear food system



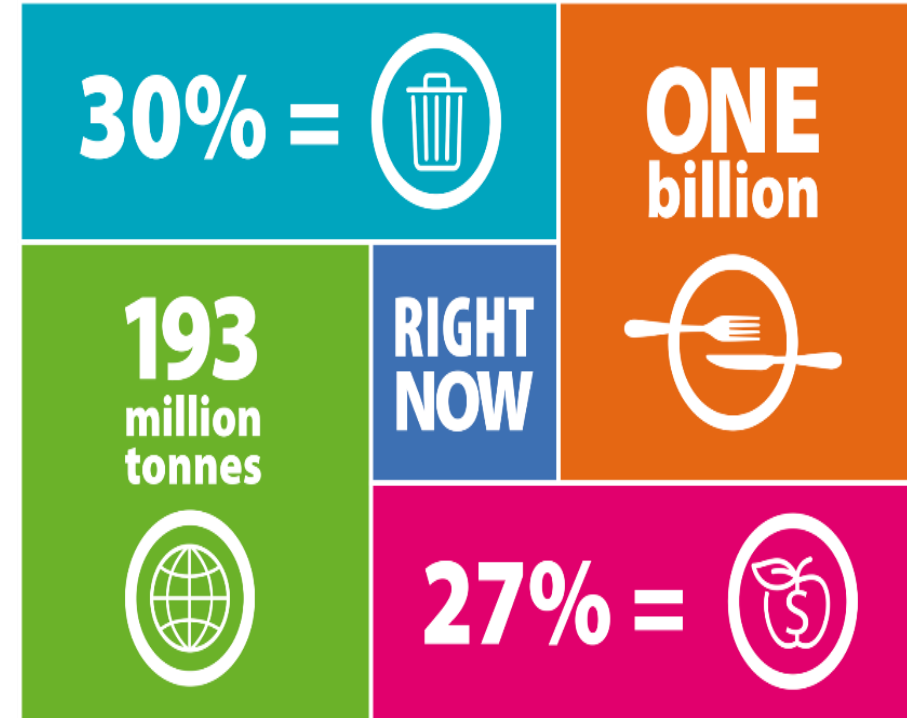
Food systems are the greatest contributor to GHGs on the planet

Food waste costs Canadians +\$17 billion/year

Globally three billion people are food insecure

1 in 8 Guelph-Wellington residents reported living in a food insecure household

Major source of plastics waste



**What is your guess on how much food is wasted?**

# The Avoidable Crisis of Food Waste

**58%**

Of all food in Canada annually is lost or wasted

**32%**

Of this food could be redirected to support Canadians

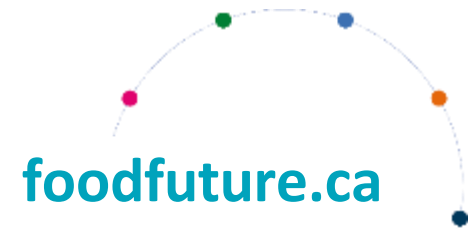
**56.5 MILLION**

Tonnes of CO2 equivalent emissions created annually



Canada

Second Harvest



# Where does Food Loss & Waste happen?

Percentage of unplanned (avoidable) and potentially edible food loss & waste (FLW)

Manufacturing



Consumers



Processing



Restaurants  
& Hotels



Retail  
Stores



Production

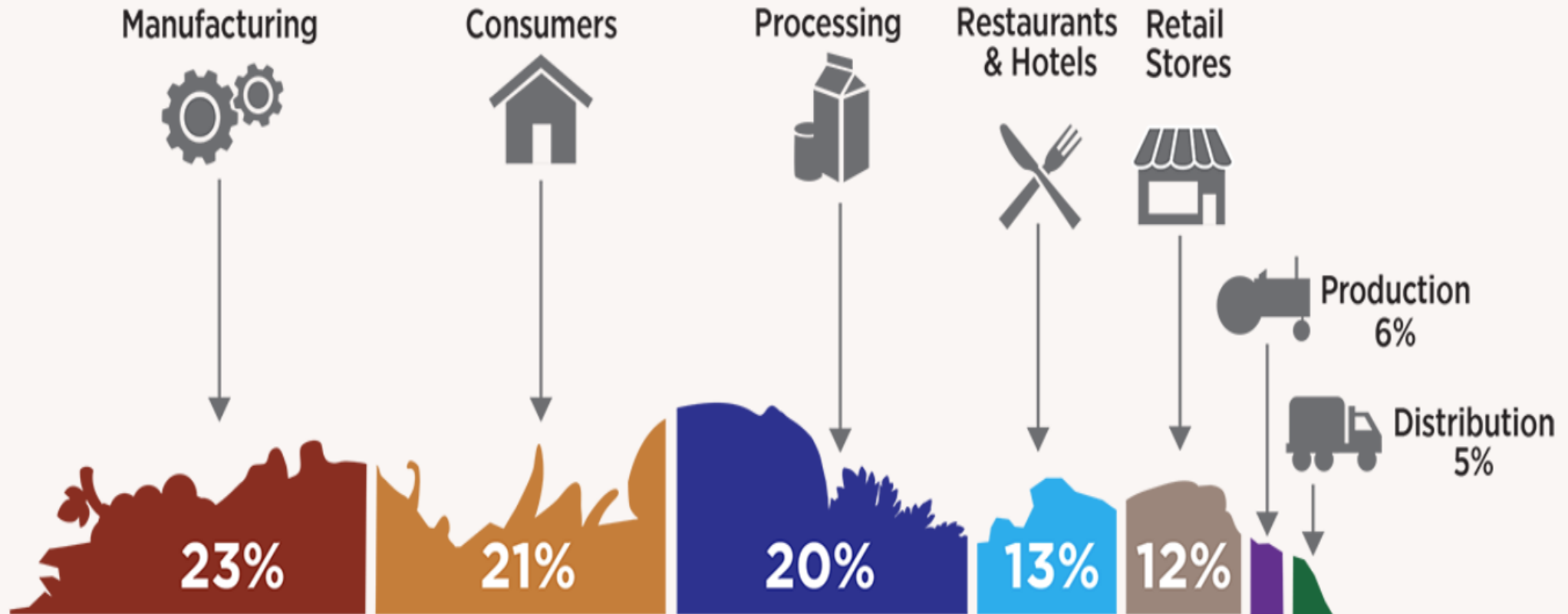


Distribution



# Food Loss & Waste (FLW) in Supply Chain

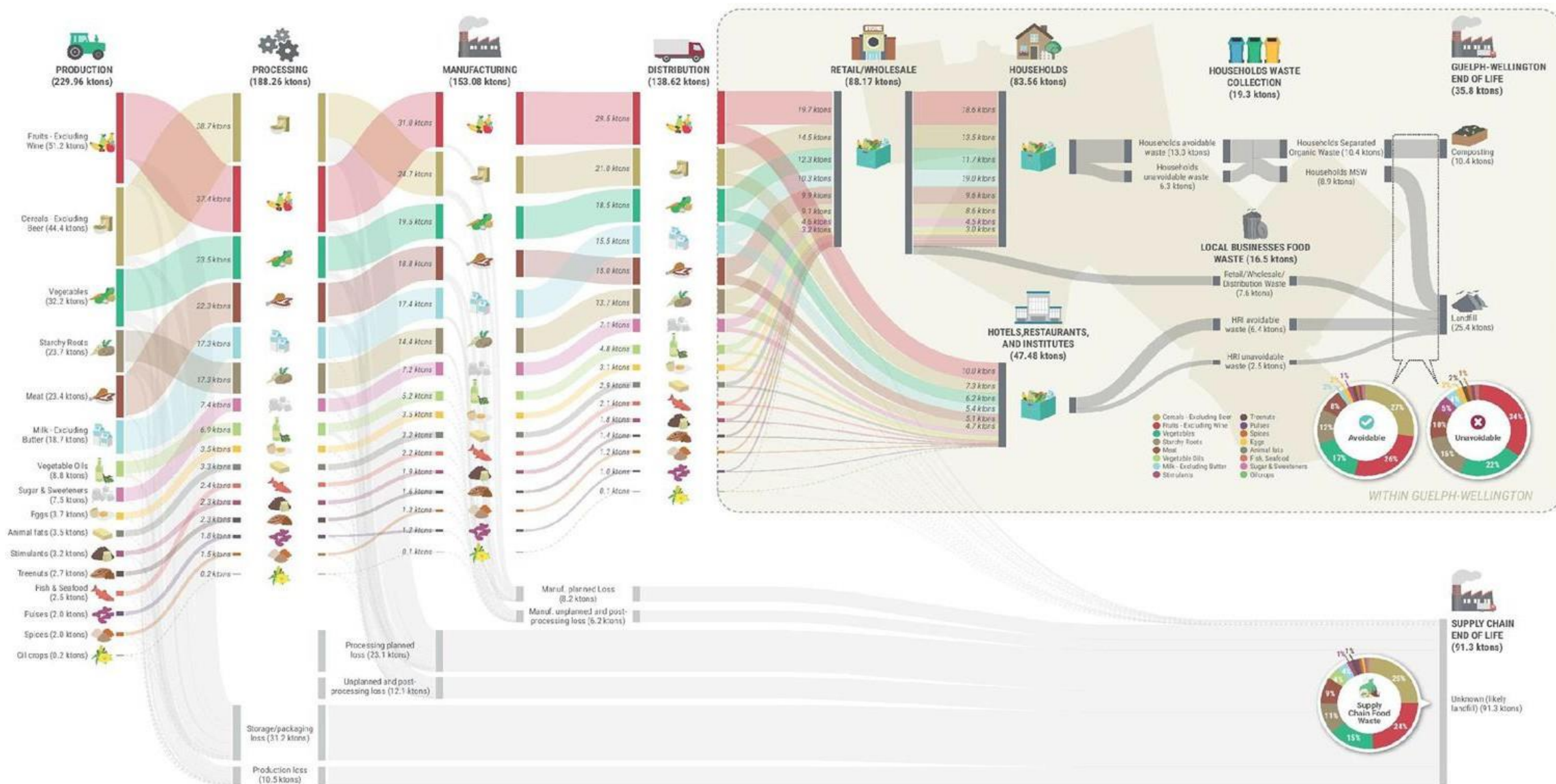
Percentage of unplanned (avoidable) and potentially edible food loss & waste (FLW)



Source: The Avoidable Crisis of Food Waste, Value Chain Management International, 2019



# Regional Food Flow Study





Where do we start?

Well it takes a community...

The Guelph-Wellington Story



# Cities/towns are the right place to start



# Guelph-Wellington

**Nearly 223,000 residents**

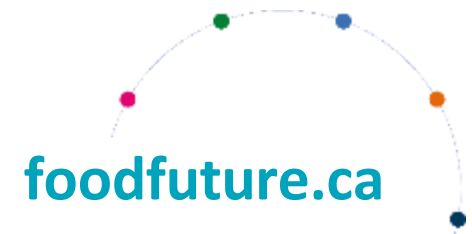
**1,600+ food businesses and entrepreneurs**

**40+ agri-food research institutes and centres**

**A vibrant and engaged local food community**



Canada





# Federal Smart Cities Challenge



Winners for  
**OURFOOD**Future

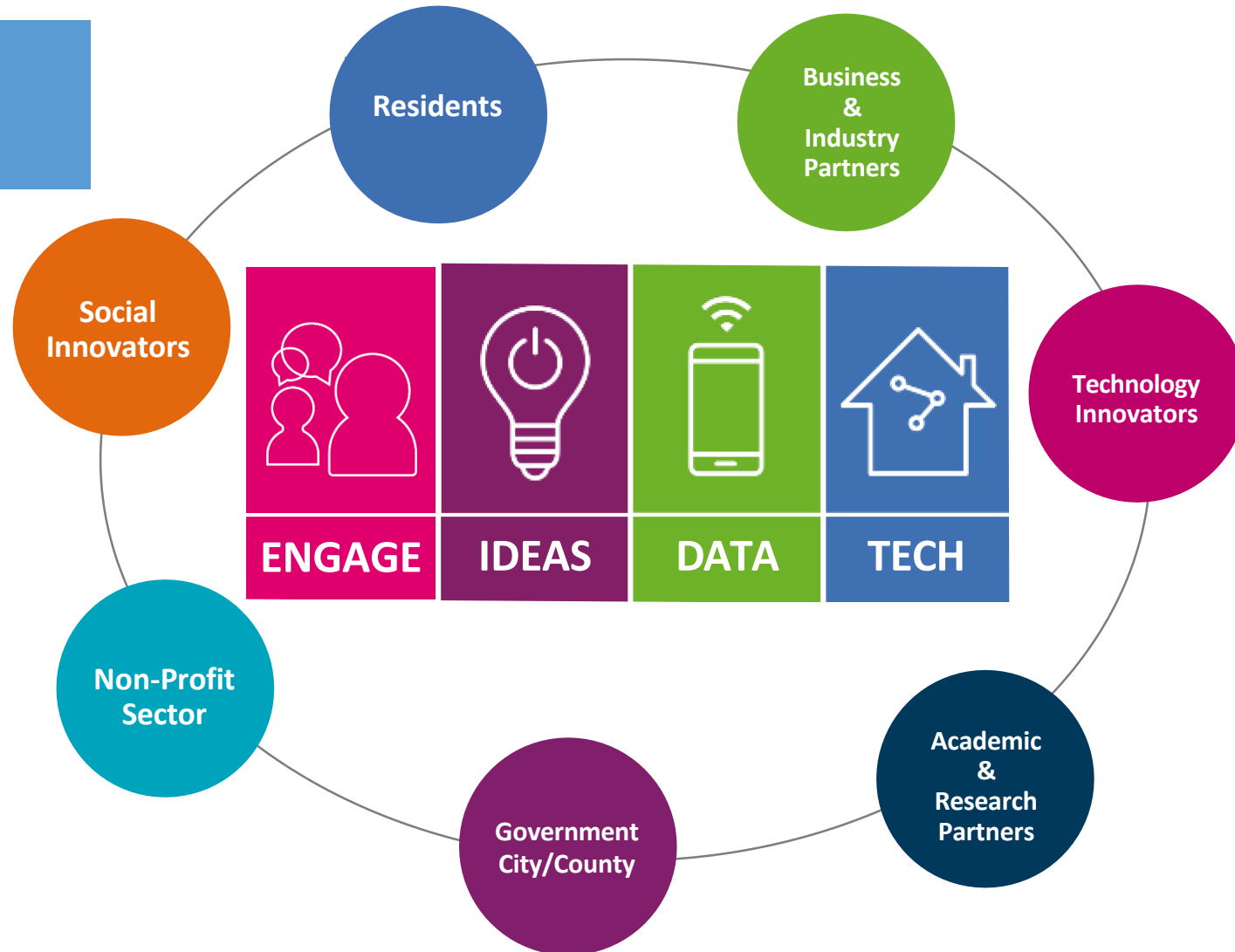


Canada



# City as collaborator, convener, catalyst

Started with  
convening Sector  
Focus Groups



# Multi-Sector Collaboration:

## **Shared Objectives**

- Re-invent how we produce, distribute and consume food
- Shrink our environmental footprint
- Create new revenue streams from waste
- Promote collaboration between food innovators
- Transform the local food ecosystem





# Whole of community initiative

- Distributed leadership & shared accountability
- 150+ organizations (public / private / not-for-profit)
- Unique connections and collaborations



# Rethink...Reimagine



Purpose

People

Planet

Prosperity

# Outcomes: 50x50x50 by 2025


50% increase in access to affordable, nutritious food;

50 new circular business and collaboration opportunities; and

50% increase in economic value by reducing or transforming food waste

**...all by 2025**





What happened  
next?

# Guelph-Wellington Rural Urban Living Lab

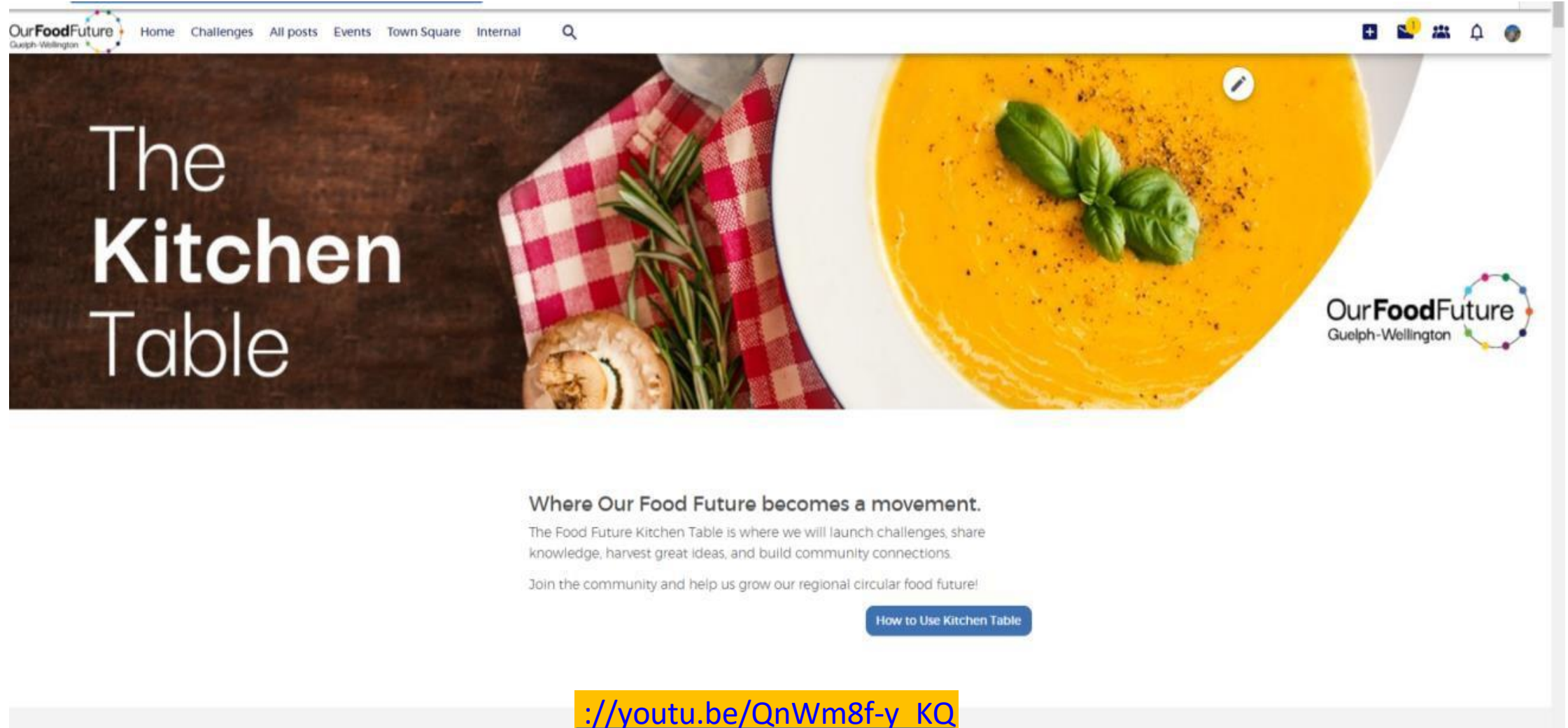




# Pathfinder Projects



# Kitchen Table Community Platform

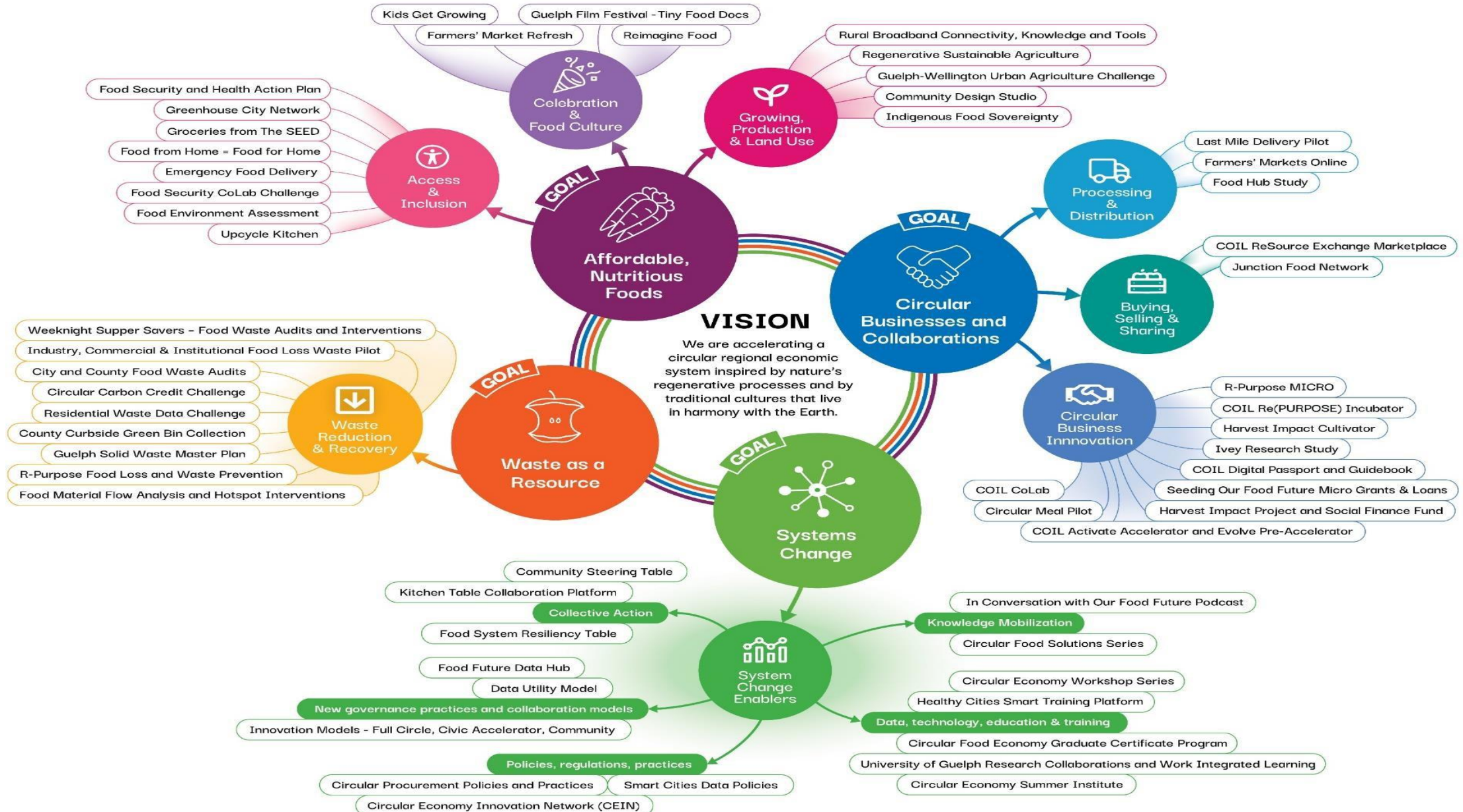




Where are we now?



# Our Food Future Programs





# Affordable Nutritious Food





# Food Environment Assessment Final Report

Nutritious Foods Workstream  
October 2021



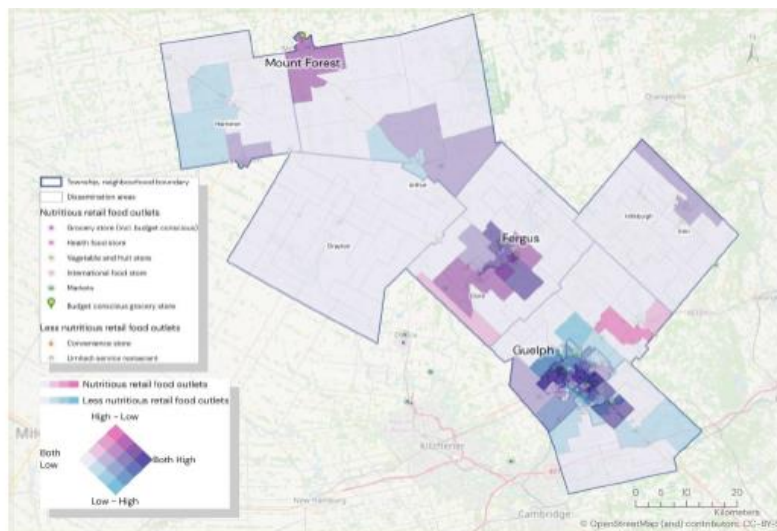


# Establishing a Baseline of the Food Environment

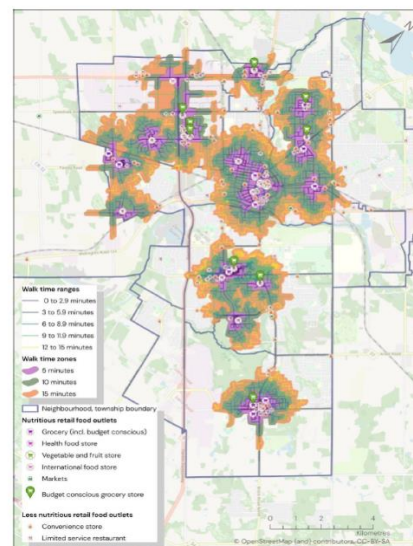


## Food Environment Assessment Final Report

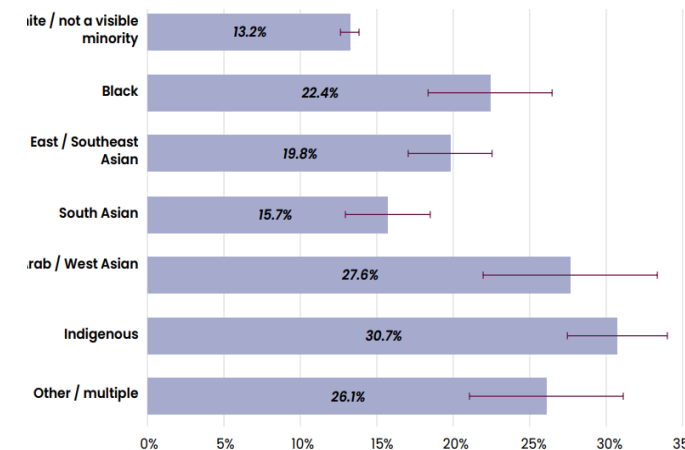
Nutritious Foods Workstream  
October 2021



Ratio of healthy / unhealthy food retail by neighbourhood



Food access by walk time



Demographics of populations experiencing food insecurity

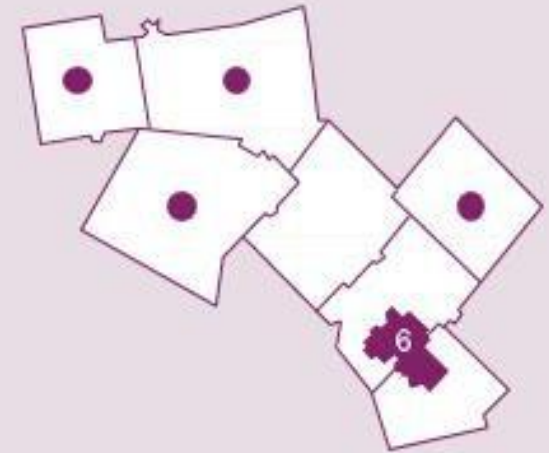
# Why Food Access Matters



**1 in 7 (14%)** of Guelph households  
and **1 in 10 (10%)** Wellington  
County households are  
food insecure



**Fewer than 25%** of food  
insecure households access  
emergency food services to  
meet their immediate needs



**4 townships** in Wellington County  
and **6 neighbourhoods** in Guelph  
have been identified as geographic  
priorities for engagement and  
actions to improve access



# Canada's Invisible Food Network

We need to radically change how we value people and how we understand food charity in this country.

**61,000**

Non-profits provide food to  
Canadians

**4X**

More food charities than grocery  
stores in Canada

**\$33 BILLION**

Value of food provided by charities  
to individuals in Canada in 2020





# Spotlight

## Growing possibilities for food access

Guelph-Wellington Urban Agriculture Challenge awards strengthen community garden projects

10

projects funded

\$106,000

distributed

\$1,380,279

total value of  
projects submitted

1,650

community  
members engaged

40

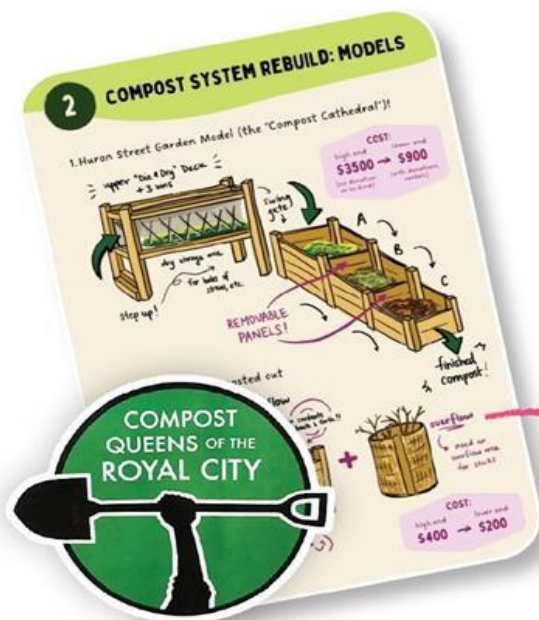
workshops and  
seminars

2,297+

lbs of  
food grown

50+

raised garden  
beds built



Helping community members  
build composters using  
recycled materials



**1.** Rainwater harvesting bench brings water supply to community gardens – .83 gallons collected for every inch of rain. **2.** Piloting garden trellis made with cattle fencing produced better yields that were easier to tend. **3.** Newcomer youth community garden programs and workshops.







*Kids Get  
Growing*  
**Gardening Kits**

# GROCERIES

FROM

THE SEED



THE SEED

Default sorting

GOOD FOOD, GREAT POSSIBILITIES

Showing 1-12 of 27 results



THE SEED IS A DO-IT-TOGETHER FOOD MOVEMENT. WE ARE WORKING TOWARDS A CONNECTED COMMUNITY WHERE EVERYONE HAS ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD.



Apple, Local (1ea)

RETAIL PRICE: \$0.80

Choose what you'll pay: ( \$ )

Minimum price: \$0.60

ADD TO CART



Bananas, (1ea)

RETAIL PRICE: \$0.35

Choose what you'll pay: ( \$ )

Minimum price: \$0.25

ADD TO CART



Beets, Red (1ea)

RETAIL PRICE: \$0.75

Choose what you'll pay: ( \$ )

Minimum price: \$0.55

ADD TO CART



how to be  
**friendlier**  
to the planet



**ORDER**

Ask for a Friendlier  
container at your  
favorite restaurants



**SCAN**

Scan the QR code  
using the Friendlier  
App



**RETURN**

Return the container  
to a Friendlier  
collection bin

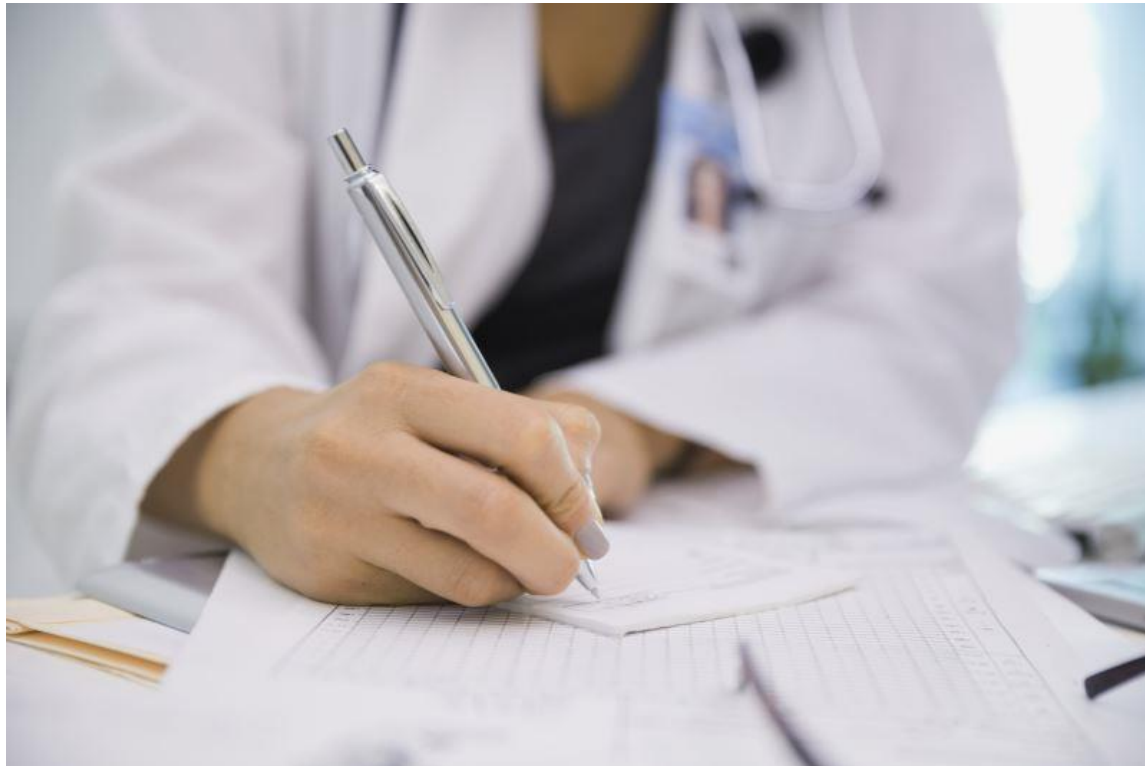
ASK YOUR FAVOURITE RESTAURANTS AND PREPARED MEAL SUPPLIERS IF THEY  
SERVE FRIENDLIER CONTAINERS

(519) 982-5685 • [www.friendlier.ca](http://www.friendlier.ca) • [info@friendlier.ca](mailto:info@friendlier.ca)





# Social Prescribing Fresh Food





# The Circular Economy is Healthy Communities



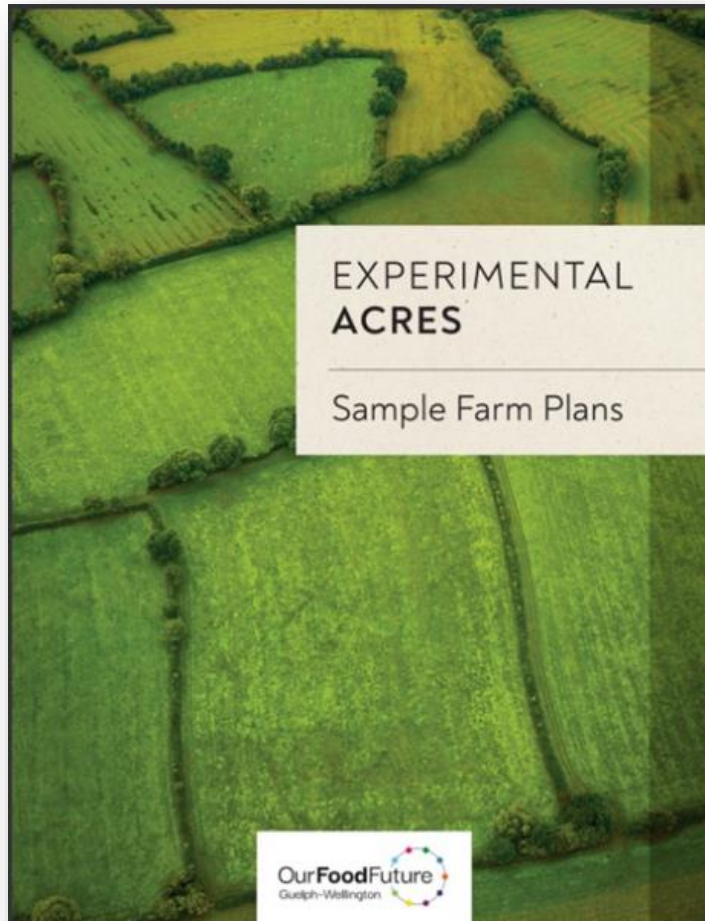
**OurFoodFuture**  
Guelph-Wellington



Circular Opportunity  
Innovation Launchpad



# How we grow food matters



<https://youtu.be/uCZFwi vd2Vg>





# Spotlight

## Regenerative farming

Healthier soils reduce reliance on extractive resources

### Principles

Minimize soil disturbance



### Practices

Avoid soil compaction  
Precision agriculture  
Low-till or No-till

Keep soil covered



Leave crop residues  
Cover crops

Maximize crop diversity



Crop rotation  
Intercropping  
Silvopasture

Maintain living roots



Perennial plant

Integrate livestock



Mob grazing  
Rotational grazing  
Animal integration  
Manure management

### Benefits

Ecological services  
Water management  
Erosion prevention  
Carbon sequestration  
Improved soil biology  
Lower GHGs  
Reduced fuel costs  
Improved soil structure  
Reduced inputs  
Improved pest management  
Improved biodiversity

## The Experimental Acres Pilot



24  
farms

Coaching and funding for up to 24 farms to explore regenerative farming techniques.

### Other supports offered:



Place-based carbon market study



Future funding paths



Best management practices



Community of support



Knowledge transfer



Wellington Soil Symposium

# Circular Businesses & Collaborations



# Circular Opportunities Innovation Launchpad



[About](#) ▾ [Programs](#) ▾ [Business Toolkit](#) ▾ [Contact](#) [FR](#)

We're accelerating Canada's  
transition to a sustainable, circular  
economy — starting with the food  
and environment sectors.

[Tell me more](#)



# Spotlight



Circular  
Business  
Innovation

## Building a Circular Business Ecosystem

Engaging with 1,000+ businesses and collaborations to promote and enable circularity

Circular Economy  
Urban Rural Test Bed  
Guidebook and  
Marketing Toolkit

### Launch your business into the circular economy!

According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, a global leader in accelerating circularity, becoming a circular business involves eliminating waste and pollution, saving products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems.

We have created a roadmap to track your progress against these goals. Your Circular Roadmap will help you go from business as usual to circular transformation in four steps – and our complementary services will support you every step of the way.

### Wraparound support, customized for your circular transformation

Your circular journey is the best fit for you. What is the top priority? What are the challenges? How are you moving forward?

Next, you will apply business. The Circular Economy Urban Rural Test Bed network partners will support and guide you along your journey and the Hub Connectors will provide guidance along the way. Once you have completed all four pathways and your Circular Business Model Canvas, a Connector will provide you with a "We are a Circular Business" badge to help you stand out in building Canada's circular economy.

Then, you will discover new opportunities. Connectors will help you learn about which best suit your business.

Finally, you will launch your business into the circular economy.

### Your journey, your way

Like everything else, your Circular Roadmap is a circular process. You may complete pathways concurrently or in any order – your circular journey can be tailored to meet your business needs. The services provided by our Circular Economy Urban Rural Test Bed network partners will support and guide you along your journey and the Hub Connectors will provide guidance along the way. Once you have completed all four pathways and your Circular Business Model Canvas, a Connector will provide you with a "We are a Circular Business" badge to help you stand out in building Canada's circular economy.

### Your Circular Roadmap



### Learn Pathway

For every pathway, you will gain an understanding of what it means to be a circular business and how to apply circular business practices. After completing the Circular Economy 101 training, there are several options to help you complete the pathway. You can check out the Circular Roadmap program or in touch with an Hub Connector to select a program that best suits your goals.

Options include completing 2 of:  
Harvest Impact Fund Participant  
Harvest Impact Impact Measurement Management Training  
Harvest Impact Impact Measurement Management Training and Partnership

Or, you can check out the Circular Roadmap program or in touch with an Hub Connector to select a program that best suits your goals.



Platforms, networks, training, mentor teams and toolkits connect and support circular businesses across Guelph-Wellington



24  
members

Coming soon!

Circular  
Economy 101  
post-secondary  
credit course

97  
registered  
users

resourceexchange.ca







# Growth and Success

- ✓ 100+ companies in programs
- ✓ Increased revenue projections \$14M+
- ✓ Expansion into construction, renovation and demolition (CRD) material-stream



Innovative business models



CE cluster creation



New circular technologies



Social & environmental impact



# Harvest Impact Fund

- **Social Finance Fund**

- Launch of \$2M+ fund to intake local investments and invest in local projects



**SOCIALLY  
FINANCING  
OUR FOOD  
FUTURE**

DISCOVER HOW

# Zero Waste Economic Transformation Lab

COIL's systems-change accelerator applying circular economy strategies to generate innovation, business development, and in new sectors – starting with **construction, renovation and demolition materials**.



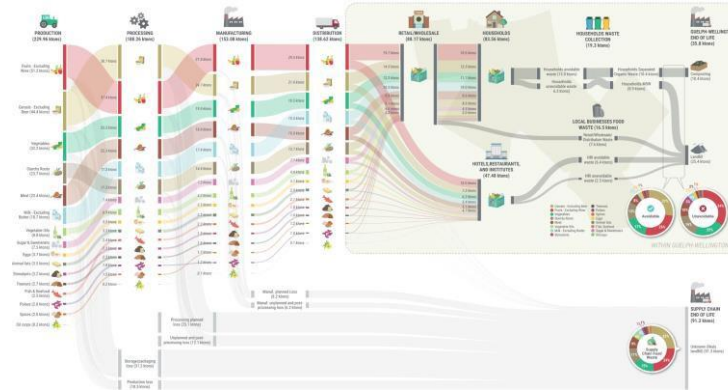
**Zero Waste**  
Economic Transformation Lab

Founding supporter:





# Our replicable process can work for most materials



# Waste as A Resource





Circular  
Business  
Innovation

## Spotlight

### Discovering value in waste

Rapid, high-impact training pathways to help businesses create new products and markets by designing out waste.

60%

of Canadians  
will purchase  
upcycled  
products

\$46B

value of upcycled market

68%

of Canada's  
food waste is  
unavoidable

64

participating businesses across  
Guelph-Wellington... so far

Heartwood Farms identified waste in processing and transportation and is developing new products from their waste stream.



Friendlier is eliminating single-use take-out containers and has quickly become Canada's fastest-growing reuse company.



Connecting local food businesses to discover and exchange unusable waste resulted in Canada's first fully circular meal, generating international attention.



<https://youtu.be/fESm2pCyY1c>

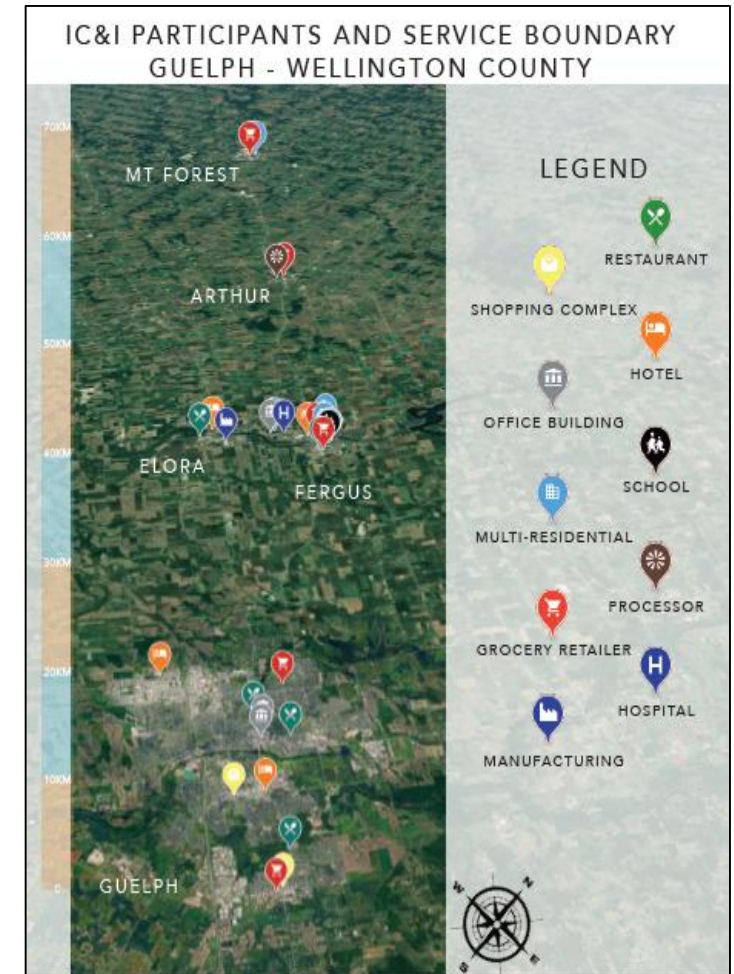


# Food Waste Diversion Pilot



Institutions, Restaurants, Industry Sector

Waste separation – recyclables, food rescue, organics to compost



# ReSource Exchange Marketplace





# AI on Waste Trucks- Organics Diversion





**System change - local knowledge and collective action.**





# Food System Resiliency Table

**YOU'RE INVITED TO  
the Food System  
Resiliency Table**

**Public Meeting:  
Thursday, Feb 16, 2023  
at 6 pm - 8 pm**

**Location: Guelph Community Health Centre  
176 Wyndham Street North, Guelph**

**Light refreshments will be served &  
bus tickets available.**

## Your Guelph-Wellington Food Charter Toolkit



Have you  
signed the  
Guelph-  
Wellington  
Food Charter?



**It's now  
time  
to take  
action!**



**This  
toolkit  
can help  
you get  
started.**



Toolkit for Eaters → page 3  
Toolkit for Growers → page 5  
Toolkit for Business  
and Institutions → page 7  
Toolkit for Policy Makers → page 8  
Toolkit for Community  
Food Projects → page 9

**Call for Artists:  
"Unearthing an Oral  
History of Food Activism"**

**Submission Extension:  
Proposal due October 30, 2022**

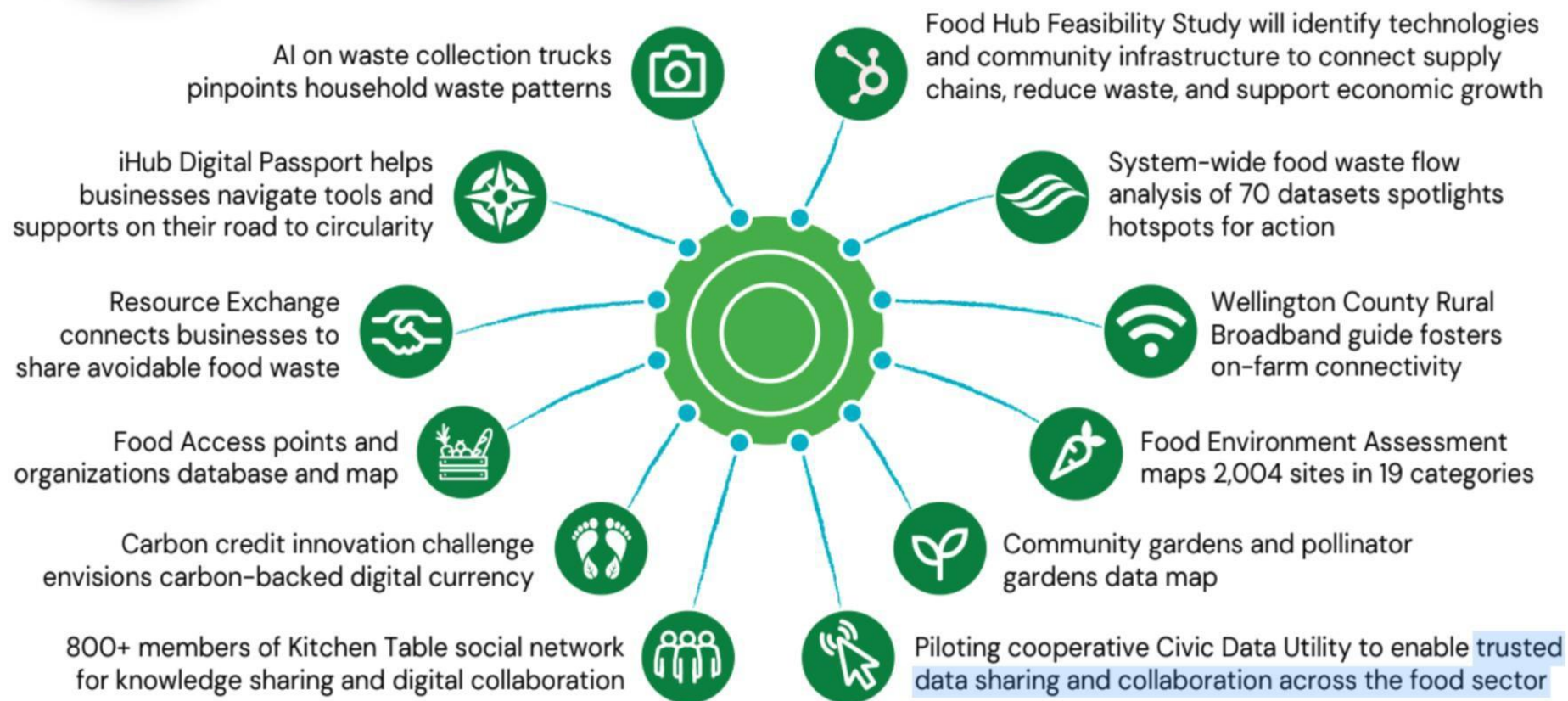




## Spotlight

### Harnessing data and technology to guide Our Food Future

Enabling, collecting and analysing data and technology to further direct evidence-informed circular solutions







**88,064**

meals prepared  
and delivered to  
community members



Individuals with increased  
access to affordable,  
nutritious foods

**7,836**



Acres of land piloting  
regenerative  
agriculture practices

**150**



Data sets  
centralized in the  
Food Future Data Hub

**60**



Stakeholders  
engaged in  
Our Food Future

**1,079**



New funding  
leveraged

**\$18,072,507**

## Our Impact 2020-2022



Circular Opportunity  
Innovation Launchpad



Value of inkind  
contributions

**\$1,772,598**



Value of supports  
for NGOs

**\$3,046,868**



Value of supports  
for businesses  
and social enterprises

**\$2,028,505**



Value saved and/or earned  
by shifting to more circular  
business practices

**\$1,247,409**



Dollar value of food  
distributed to community  
members at a reduced  
rate or free of charge

**\$636,402**



Businesses that  
established or expanded  
their circular practice

**243**



Business collaborations  
strengthening the  
circular supply chain

**308**



New products and  
services from  
diverted food waste

**23**



Tonnes of food waste  
diverted, upcycled  
or recycled

**86,458**



Tonnes of food  
upcycled to  
new products

**75,567**



GHG Emissions  
prevented

**116,419 tonnes**



Join the movement.

Your seat is waiting.

[www.foodfuture.ca](http://www.foodfuture.ca)





Questions?

