



DEVELOPED BY LOW INCOME FAMILIES
TOGETHER AND THE ST. JAMES TOWN
COMMUNITY CO-OPERATIVE

OASIS FOOD HUB FEASIBILITY STUDY 2018/2019

FUNDED BY THE CITY OF TORONTO
COMMUNITY EVENTS AND PROJECTS FUND

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GLOSSARY

Aquaponics: a method for growing food that combines raising fish (aquaculture) and growing plants in water (hydroponics) in a symbiotic environment. In basic terms, the plants clean the water for the fish, and the fish provide nutrients for the plants through their waste. It is a water and space efficient farming technique.

Bulk Food Buying Club: an organized group of people who pool their money together to buy food in large volumes (bulk). Purchasing in bulk lowers the price of the item for the individual.

Healthy Food: means different things to different people. In this report, we mean organic, fair or direct trade, low-emissions, high-nutrient, culturally-relevant food that is actually affordable and accessible to people of all income levels. In short, we mean food that's good for the body, the pocket, and the planet.

Resilience: the ability of an individual, group, or system to bounce back from crisis. Said another way, it is the ability of a system to absorb or tolerate disturbances and shocks. Talking about the climate change crisis, many say we can "bounce forward" into a better society.

Climate-resilience: the ability of an individual, group, or system to absorb shocks from climate change, adapt to climate changes, and mitigate its harmful impacts.

Community resilience: the ability of a community to withstand and adapt with economic, social, and environmental shocks and changes.

Timebanking: an economic system that uses time as its currency instead of money. Developed in the 1980s by economist Edgar Khan, there are over 500 around the world. It is an indirect barter that allows participants to trade time, skills, and knowledge. For example, Jacob spends 1 hour cooking a meal for Aamira, who "pays" him one-time credit. Jacob takes that time credit and "pays" for a one-hour exercise class with Nadia, who uses her earned time credit to have Hassan fix her bike, and so on.

Timebanking is used in OASIS for multiple purposes, including to keep track of volunteer hours in an accountable and transparent way; and, to enable *reciprocal relationships* with farmers who can pay time credits to people who help out on the farm, and can sell their produce for part time credits in return. Time banking has been shown to increase social capital, women's rights, and community well-being.

SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The OASIS Food Hub Feasibility Study, funded by the City of Toronto, contributes to the urgent process of adapting and improving our local food systems for climate change mitigation, community resilience, and food security.

The OASIS Food Hub integrates urban indoor agriculture, local bulk-purchasing, kitchen and food processing, and organic waste diversion into an ecological food system that mimics the **food cycle**. Run through a community co-operative, it aims to **meet healthy food needs, build a resilient and inclusive social community, and restore wild spaces** within walking distance.

The study team used an **iterative process** rooted in **developmental evaluation** to engage the community, technical experts, stakeholders, land owners, farmers, local decision makers, and agency staff across five areas: community needs and buy-in; stakeholder and political support; possibility and suitability of locations; technical feasibility; and, financial sustainability.

The study shows **strong desirability, feasibility, and replicability of the OASIS Food Hub**. The community is skilled, enthusiastic, and in need; but, requires investment and space to empower more time-commitment. There is a strong organizational network around OASIS to enable sustained success and growth.

While **no site(s) has been confirmed**, three sites have been established for immediate small-scale hub activities, and three sites have been identified as the most possible and suitable locations for components of the Food Hub.

The **biggest challenge** is an enabling political environment. While OASIS meets multiple policies, it **requires collaboration** and integrated thinking across government offices, especially at the municipal level, that are used to working in silos. Zoning and permitting will also be a challenge.

WaterFarmers comprehensive technical report breaks OASIS down into modular components and phases. It found the model is feasible and replicable, with a multitude of possible spaces. Key findings demonstrate OASIS can divert 10% of the neighbourhood's organic waste into productive compost and soil; and, produce 7.7 tonnes/year of fish and 15,900 lbs/year of specialty mushrooms alongside thousands of tonnes of plant-food.

The business case shows at least 35 people can be employed by OASIS, and argues Phase 1 (kitchen, office, and storage space) and Phase 2 (aquaponics and mushroom farming) should be funded as an integrated investment as they have the strongest sustainability and cost-benefit analysis. Without a confirmed space, the business case was unable to state with 100% certainty that OASIS can be self-sustaining within five-years; however, the research and technical teams believe this goal is reasonable and achievable.

During the 12 months period of the study, April 2018 to April 2019, many events occurred that directly impacted the project and the community including municipal and provincial elections, and several emergency events that displaced thousands of tenants and increased awareness of the need for onsite capacity for resilience in St James Town.

In spite of these setbacks, significant work was done by many great minds and dedicated volunteers; and, the resources (templates, surveys, matrixes, research, analyses), relationships, and visions developed through this feasibility study have already created significant value for participants, St. James Town, the City of Toronto, and food systems sustainability at large.

The end-of-report recommendations state that what is needed now is a commitment to collaboration from relevant government offices, and a formal space agreement. We are confident that with these two elements in place, financing will materialize, and the community will rise to the task of operationalizing and sustaining the OASIS Food Hub.

With commitment and inspiration,

The OASIS Food Hub Feasibility Study Team



SECTION II: INTRODUCTION

DEFINING THE STUDY:

In April 2018, we began a year-long Feasibility Study of the OASIS Food Hub in the St. James Town neighbourhood, funded by the City of Toronto Community Projects and Events. The study was led by the St. James Town Community Co-operative with support from our trustee, Scadding Court Community Center, and partners Low Income Families Together, WaterFarmers, and Conscious Minds Co-operative.

The study asked: *is a community-run, climate-resilient food hub generating healthy and affordable food feasible and desirable in St. James Town?*

To answer this question, the study assessed five elements:

1. Buy-In From, and Needs Assessment of the Community
2. Stakeholder and Political Support
3. Possibility and Suitability of Location(s)
4. Technical Feasibility
5. Financial Sustainability

The study was designed and implemented by a team of volunteers, two part-time staff (Darryl D'Souza, Yi Fan Yin-Cheng), and two expert consultants (WaterFarmers, Tinashe Kanengoni – Seed to Table), with support from summer students funded through the federal government's Canada Summer Jobs program, and in-kind support from our educational partner, Conscious Minds Co-operative.

WHAT IS OASIS?

OASIS stands for '*Organic Agro-ecological Sustainable Integrated System.*' It is an ecological food system model for urban high-rise neighbourhoods that holistically integrates the full food cycle from production to procurement, processing, distribution, waste management, and land regeneration.

OASIS OBJECTIVES:

Improve Health and Food Security

Year-round access to affordable, nutritious, local, and fair/direct-trade food.

Create Sustainable Jobs and Social Enterprise Opportunities

Work in food production, green technology, community development, management, education, and more!

Provide Accredited and Community Education Programs

Cultivate climate-resilient food security skills, knowledge, and relationships.

Reduce Impact on Environment

Sustainable systems and technologies for food production, distribution, and waste management.



OASIS zones of activity

OASIS is run by and for the community, through the democratically and resident-majority owned St. James Town Community Co-op (described below). It aims to provide education, employment, enterprise support, and above all, food and water to residents and surrounding communities. *The OASIS Food Hub becomes self-sustaining within 5 years of operation*, and contributes to the restoration of healthy human-nature ecosystems.



Early St. James Town Community Cafe dinner, 2012. St James Town residents observing community surveys: what would you like to see at a Community Cafe?

THE HISTORY OF OASIS

In 2011, a group of St. James Town residents approached locally-founded human rights organization Low Income Families Together (LIFT) with a burning desire – they wanted to bring healthy affordable food into the neighbourhood in a way that built community and social inclusion. And so, they started to run pop-up cafes – providing healthy Pay What You Can dinners on a monthly basis. It was a beautiful experience of community and food...but it was also a lot of work. Lugging equipment and food from kitchen to venue, constantly searching for space, and relying on grants; it was an exhausting and unsustainable way of doing community-food.

The Café did a feasibility study: What organizational structure could adequately “hold” and sustain the work of the cafe? The answer: a **community co-operative**. The St. James Town Community Co-operative (SJTCC) was then founded, with the mission of enabling community projects and social enterprises that improve the quality of life in St. James Town, with a focus on food security and resilience to climate change. The co-op is a democratic non-profit that maintains at least 50% resident membership to ensure control remains with those most directly impacted and served, St. James Town residents.

Co-op members got to talking and realized that a truly sustainable food co-op would not only serve food, but would also grow it, procure it, and manage the waste. We realized we could grow food in our high-rise community, and so began the OASIS Food Hub – core project of the St. James Town Community Co-op.

All of this was developed under the care and guidance of incubator LIFT - formed in 1991 to empower low-income citizen participation. As an organizational member of the co-op, LIFT brings a history of successful community initiatives, and the expertise of founder Josephine Grey, who has helped establish many thriving organizations including:

- Foodshare
- Project Esperance – housing for survivors of domestic violence
- Green Thumbs Growing Kids Winchester Garden
- The Wellesley Community Center
- Income Security Advocacy Center
- St. James Town Community Corner
- St. James Town Youth Council
- U4Change
- Conscious Minds Co-operative

Back in 2006, LIFT conducted a human rights assessment of St. James Town for the United Nations; and, among the many deficiencies found, access to healthy food and water was identified as a key human rights concern of residents.

LIFT supports the Community Café turned Co-operative as part of its sustained commitment to human rights in its home community. Since the founding of the Café in 2011, approximately \$300,000, including this study, has been invested by:

- City Hope
- Tower Renewal
- Toronto Community Foundation
- Foodshare
- World Vision
- Yonge Street Mission
- 736 Outreach Fund
- Center for Social Innovation
- TCHC Social Investment Fund
- Healthier Cities Hub – Dalla Lana School of Public Health
- City of Toronto – Projects and Events



Timeline Towards Founding of OASIS



WHY A CO-OPERATIVE?

There are three major reasons why the co-operative model was chosen:

First, co-operatives are the only legally recognized democratic organizational structure. Co-ops are flexible, and compatible with the needs and values of our human rights centered cafe turned co-op. There are 7 International Co-op Principles to which all co-ops abide:

- Democratic Member Control and Ownership (one member one vote)
- Economic Participation of Members
- Concern for Community
- Co-operation among Co-operatives
- Open and Voluntary Membership
- Autonomy and Independence
- Education, Training, and Information

Second, St. James Town is a global neighbourhood with residents from around the world. Co-ops are a known and trusted model, particularly in the majority countries (Global South). As the International Co-op Alliance (ICA) notes, over 1 billion people on the planet are members of over 3 million co-operatives, employing 10% of the world's working population[1].

Third, a co-operative is a resilient model that thrives in good times, and in bad. In a study done for the International Labour Organization, Birchall and Ketilson (2009) found that co-operatives fare better than corporations during times of financial crisis. The key reason is that **a co-op's main goal is to meet the common needs of its members**, not only the "bottom line". Birchall and Ketilson (2009) explain that "when the purposes of the business are aligned with those of members who are both investors and consumers of the cooperative, the results are loyalty, commitment, shared knowledge, member participation, underpinned by strong economic incentives" (p.13). Co-operatives are also more resilient than corporations to the challenges of the first few years of a new business. The Ministry of Industry and Commerce in Quebec found that "More than 6 out of 10 cooperatives survive more than five years, as compared to almost 4 businesses out of 10 for the private sector in Québec and in Canada in general. More than 4 out of 10 cooperatives survive more than 10 years, compared to 2 businesses out of 10 for the private sector" (Birchall and Ketilson, 2009, p.31).

A bonus fourth reason for co-ops? *"There is a widely held consensus among many actors, including the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, and the International Co-operative Alliance, that the cooperative enterprise is the type of organization that is most suited to addressing all dimensions of reducing poverty and exclusion"*[2].

[1] <https://www.ica.coop/en/cooperatives/facts-and-figures#database-of-cooperative-statistics>

[2] <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1247ilo.pdf>

STATE OF OASIS AT THE START OF THE STUDY:

The study enabled our team to drill down into the technical and neighbourhood specifics OASIS feasibility; however, this study was not the first step of the development of the hub, but rather represents an important pinnacle of over six years of work. Going into the study, we had an OASIS website, six years of community food work and research, multiple possible budgets, grant applications, and program drafts. This study built on this work in order to produce a model and plan ready for operationalization. The state of OASIS pre-study in our five focus areas:

SPACE

- No confirmed space for any component
- Recently lost office space in Yonge Street Mission
- Held meeting and building walk-through with TCHC organized through former MPP Glenn Murray, site visit on March 2nd 2017, see appendix 1

COMMUNITY

- Strong community support
- Existing co-op structure and membership
- Emerged out of Community Café

STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

- Conscious Minds Co-op and WaterFarmers were confirmed partners
- No community organizational partners
- Minimal contact with farmers

FUNDING AND STAFF

- All volunteer
- Finished last grant

POLITICAL SUPPORT

- Initial discussions had taken place with provincial, city, and federal representatives.
- Verbal support but no firm commitments from these 3 levels existed.
- Support Letter From Former MPP Glenn Murray and Tower Renewal, see appendix 2

SECTION III: CONTEXT AND DEFINING THE NEED

NEIGHBOURHOOD DESCRIPTION:

St. James Town is a neighbourhood in downtown Toronto (Ontario, Canada) and is one of the most diverse communities in the world. It contains 19+ high rise buildings on 32.1 acres between Bloor and Parliament Streets and Sherbourne and Wellesley Avenues, with at least four more high-rises currently being proposed for construction. It is surrounded by Rosedale Valley to the North, Cabbagetown to the East and South, and the neighborhoods of Upper Jarvis and Church & Wellesley to the West and South.



St. James Town Neighbourhood Boundaries

St. James Town is a unique neighbourhood. While the OASIS Food Hub can be adapted to fit well with *any* neighbourhood, St. James Town presents unique characteristics that make it an ideal neighbourhood for an OASIS Food Hub, both in its assets and its needs.

Assets

St. James Town has a wealth of potential, both in the characteristics of its built and social environment.

Unused Below-Grade Space: St. James Town has extensive unused basement and sub-basement space, and underused underground garages. Unused space includes a closed underground YMCA with a gymnasium, change rooms, squash courts, and offices. There are also at least 4 unused underground pools in the neighbourhood, prime for aquaponics retrofitting. Retrofitting these spaces for public use regularly comes up in public consultations as these spaces provide ideal opportunities for building retrofits and could house aquaponics growing, mushroom farms, compost systems, food and water storage, and more.

An assessment of the underground garage will be undertaken by Toronto Community Housing Corporation in 2019. Repair of underground garage space on TCHC property started in 2018 in a phased manner.

High Walkability: Being downtown, St. James Town has a high walkability score with access to schools, churches, public transit, the Sherbourne health centre, community organizations, and commercial stores. It also borders two high-income neighbourhoods – Cabbagetown and Rosedale, who could be high end clients of the Food Hub.

Highly Educated and Skilled Newcomer Population: St. James Town is a landing strip for newcomers from around the world; many of whom arrive with high levels of education and skills. A survey conducted by the Toronto Centre for Community Learning and Development asked, “If you are currently employed, what level of education is required to perform your job?” 47% of St. James Town respondents said they need less than high school education (Dhungana, 2012). During the study, we found residents supportive and eager to engage in OASIS with master’s degrees or higher in agronomy, composting, mechanical engineering, architecture, business, public relations, post-secondary researchers, and human resources. We also connected with life-long farmers, foragers, and chefs. *St. James Town is filled with experts ready to run OASIS.*

Cultural and Age Diversity: Over 65% of St. James Town’s residents are recent immigrants from over 100 countries (City of Toronto, 2018), including the Philippines, Sri Lanka, China, Pakistan, Korea, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eastern European nation-states (Barnes, 2011), Syria and Venezuela. 66% of residents are of working age (between the ages of 25-64 years old), 12% are children (0-14 years old), 12% are youth (15-24 years old), and 9% are seniors (65 years old and over) (City of Toronto, 2018).

Cultural diversity is an asset for an OASIS Food Hub. It means we get to work with knowledge and examples – and recipes! – from around the world. Diversity is also a key feature of resilience, especially for community and climate change resilience. As Canada becomes home to more climate refugees and climatic changes, OASIS in St. James Town could provide a key site for learning and training in cross-cultural exchange and co-operation for self-sustaining community-planet benefits. *The world is in need of positive examples of climate resilience that facilitates cooperation among diverse people – St. James Town could be that example; and could translate its best practices into over 140 languages.*

Needs

Underserved and Unrecognized: St. James Town has been obscured in census data, which takes a wider geographic tract than the small boundaries of the neighbourhood including a “stretch of affluent housing on Jarvis Street”; and, as a result, has never been listed as a Neighbourhood Improvement Area. The Service Providers’ Network is currently petitioning for a change in designation, which would bring an “increase [in] funding and support services for the neighbourhood that is ‘highly overlooked and highly neglected’”, said Robb Johannes, co-chair of the St. James Town Service Providers’ Network (Elsayed, CBC, 2019). *The OASIS Food Hub could significantly increase the amount of attention, funding, and community capacity for a better served neighbourhood.*

Low-Income and Underemployed: The percentage of the population categorized as low-income in St. James Town is 36%, compared to the City of Toronto average of 20%. The median household income is just over \$35,000 per family, compared to the average income of \$112,000 Cabbagetown bordering St. James Town (City of Toronto, 2018; Canadian Urban Institute, 2016). These numbers are also skewed by inaccurate population figures and geographic boundaries.

Highly qualified persons immigrate to Canada and land in St. James Town; but struggle with the state requirements for re-certification, which often require re-doing 6+ years of postsecondary education. Thus, St. James Town is filled with doctors driving cabs, and engineers working in Tim Hortons. The Toronto Centre for Community Learning and Development asked, “If you are currently employed, what level of education is required to perform your job?” 47% of St. James Town respondents said they need less than a high school education (Dhungana, 2012). When compared to residents’ actual qualifications, it’s clear many St. James Town residents are overqualified for their income-generating positions. *This has a dampening effect on the economy and undervalues people’s potential. OASIS can provide avenues for skilled newcomers to apply their knowledge for the benefit of their community.*

High Density, Low Public / Green Space: St. James Town's population density is more than 18 times that of the City of Toronto. Estimates of the population vary between 18,000 to 23,000 residents. Building managers and school staff say the number is higher than census counts due to newly landed/undocumented residents and others such as domestic workers who live here part time. *With over 20,000 people in less than a quarter square kilometer, St. James Town has been described the most densely populated community in the country* (Kwan, 2018; D'Souza, Hassen, Grey, & Pinto, 2017). Currently, four of nineteen high-rise buildings are TCHC social housing for low-income vulnerable tenants; mostly disabled people, single parent families and seniors. New town-houses and high-rises were recently added to the neighbourhood, with more development being proposed to the city.

OASIS meets key needs that come with such a dense community, including:

Few Public and Green Spaces: *Green space and access to nature are significant determinants of physical, social, emotional, and spiritual health.* Being a concrete neighbourhood, St. James Town lacks sufficient usable, safe and accessible green and community spaces for leisure and informal socializing (Barnes, 2011; Montesanti & Gardner, 2010). Available green spaces are poorly maintained with uncollected garbage left in the open (Montesanti & Gardner, 2010). While there are recent efforts to improve these spaces through community planning and new murals in conjunction with Tower Renewal, it is a challenging area for programming, maintenance and safety. More green space has been proposed by a new development, which would also add hundreds more people who would need to access them. ***OASIS could provide climate-controlled green and community space accessible all-year round.***

Poor Maintenance: St. James Town has aging high-rise rental apartment buildings, many of which lack basic hygienic utilities such as exhaust fans, and all of which are in need of major repairs (Barnes, 2011). Recent fires and electrical issues across buildings in 2018 and 2019 have stressed the immediate need for maintenance and building upgrades.

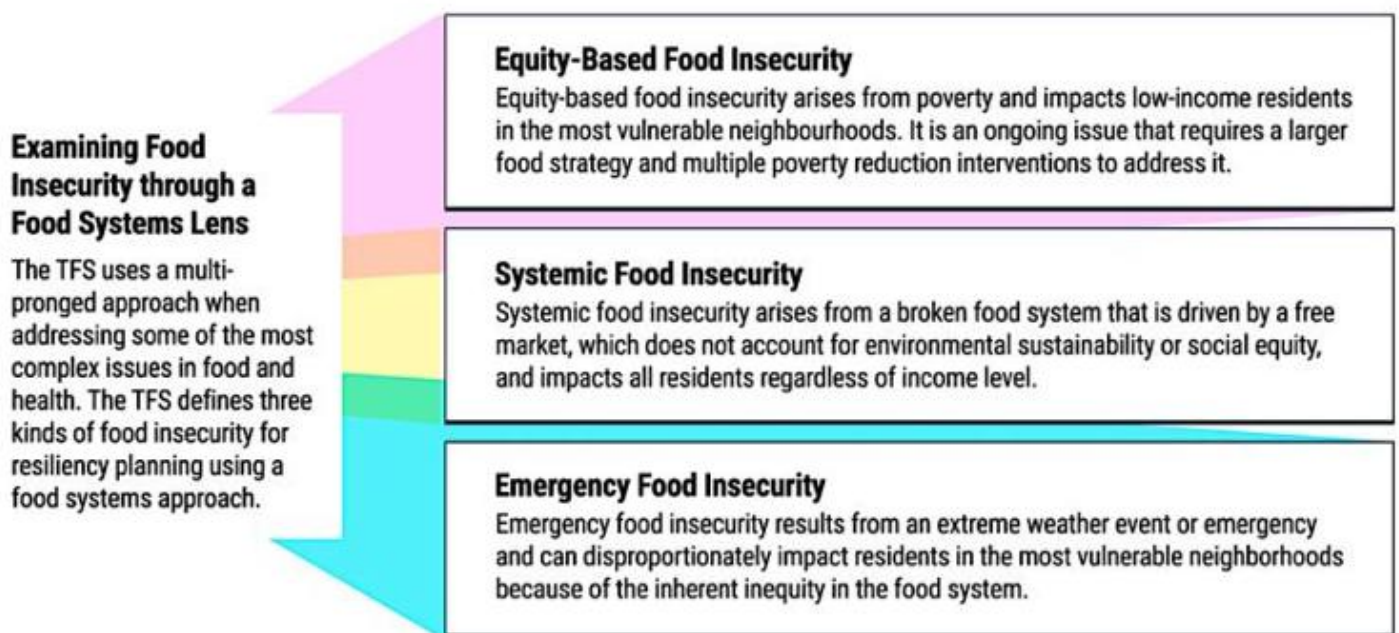
Limited Recycling, no Green Waste Management: The survey conducted by Toronto Centre for Community Learning and Development found 66.67% of St. James Town respondents feel the provision for recycling and organic waste diversion is not adequate in the community (Dhungana, 2012). *OASIS provides opportunity for meaningful waste management, and a green culture of reducing, reusing, and recycling; waste is a resource when it is treated as such.*

Low Social Cohesion / Belonging: The time-banking feasibility study by LIFT highlighted the need for social cohesion in St. James Town due to its lack of homogeneity. Many residents avoid bonding with neighbours due to safety concerns and lack of leisure time from paid work (D'Souza, Hassen, Grey, & Pinto, 2017). **The need for stronger community cohesion was further reinforced by the city councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam** in her speech to the gathering of the third design charette organized by OASIS. **OASIS is a project of social inclusion and food, and provides key ways to meet this need.**

FOOD SECURITY IN ST. JAMES TOWN

WHAT IS FOOD SECURITY?

In 1996, the World Food Summit defined food security as existing “**when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life**” (FAO, 1993, Chapter 2). In a 2018 report by Toronto Public Health, food security was broken down by three categories presented in the graphic below:



Toronto Food Strategy, 2018, p.6

IS ST. JAMES TOWN FOOD SECURE?

While the neighbourhood does have physical access to food with two grocery stores and a third within a 10-minute walk, St. James Town is insecure in terms of economic access to sufficient, safe, nutritious, and culturally-relevant food.

In LIFT's 2006 LEAD Report on Human Rights in St. James Town to the United Nations, various participants stated that they do not have enough money for basic necessities such as food and shelter. They reported that even if their rent was subsidized the rates of welfare were insufficient to support an adequate diet. The local foodbank is described as having very poor-quality food and being difficult to access due to limited times and a humiliating process to prove eligibility for receiving food assistance. P.14

Though 13 years have passed, the situation remains the same or worse. Residents talked with our researchers informally about the poor quality of food bank provisions, and of fresh produce in the grocery stores, the expensiveness of organic goods, and the limited access to culturally and religiously specific foods such as Halal meat.

In 2018-2019, the Red Cross was called in twice to support residents – particularly with food – in building-wide emergencies. Local churches and neighbours were keen to help, but the channels did not exist, and were unable to support. St. James Town is emergency food insecure, alongside being equitably and systemically insecure due to economic, immigration status, language, race, family status, cultural, and structural-institutional barriers.

The OASIS Food Hub aims to holistically address these three food insecurities by creating a full-cycle food system that creates social cohesion and equitable access through its human rights values, co-operative governance, tools and structures for inclusion. Through OASIS, food security will be increased directly and will also through its impacts on social determinants of health (sense of belonging, employment, access to green space, and more).

CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY: EMERGENCY AND SYSTEMIC FOOD INSECURITY

Climate Change is happening now, and it is affecting billions of people globally, Canada included. The last few decades have brought dangerous changes to Canada's climate and weather (The Climate Reality Project, 2018). For our food, it means growing seasons are shifting, climates and their plants are changing, microorganisms essential for healthy soils are dying, droughts and floods are becoming increasingly frequent and severe, and extreme weather events leave communities and farmlands increasingly devastated. **Vulnerable populations become more vulnerable with climate change; but also, offer key lessons of resilience and survival that should be empowered.**

In informal dialogue in this study, we learned that *before colonization, Indigenous nations had a 10-30-year food store in Tkaronto, the meeting place, for any nation who had experienced food supply shortages.* **Now in Toronto, nearly all food comes in through a single food terminal that sits on a floodplain;** and, as in other cities, researchers estimate that most food retail stores may only have three days of fresh food and up to 17 days of all food products in stock in the case of an emergency (Zeuli, Nijhuis, & Gerson-Nieder, 2018).

In St. James Town, emergencies and changing climates threaten to exacerbate food insecurity. The Lighthouse Project – a pilot hub for emergency preparedness in St. James Town 2017-2019 – notes on their website that food security as a central concern for residents, and a central component of community resilience, noting among other things that it's hard to keep food in reserve for emergencies when you're managing a low income. And, as extreme weather continues to affect the global agricultural industry, food prices will increase. (The Lighthouse Project, n.d).

EMERGENCY AND SYSTEMIC FOOD INSECURITY

St. James Town has already seen the effects of climate change and extreme weather. Many residents migrated to Canada as climate refugees, or because of human conflict aggravated by climate change. The neighbourhood is itself becoming more vulnerable too. As a high-rise neighbourhood St. James Town faces unique and increased food insecurity in extreme weather. Food access is reduced, especially for those with mobility issues, when the elevators are out of service. Food storage is shortened without electric refrigeration, and food preparation may not be safe without electricity to produce heat or pump water to upper floors. Older and disabled people with mobility issues are most at risk, as they become trapped in upper floors.

The 2003 summer blackout and 2013 winter ice storm demonstrated exactly this, as vulnerable and senior citizens were stuck in their high-rise apartments. In 2003, then MPP George Smitherman sent staff running up and down buildings bringing water to vulnerable residents. In 2013, residents describe being left to organize shelter, food and water in parks with no established communication channels. As nearly all social service organization staff in the neighbourhood live outside St. James Town, the service channels available during normal everyday life were unavailable in emergency. During the 650 Parliament fire in August 2018, the vulnerability of residents in emergencies was again painfully clear; and, even established organizations such as neighbourhood churches were unable to provide available assistance because, as was made clear by the Office of Emergency Management, there are no established lists or channels for support during emergencies (CREW event, 2018).

On the positive side, in each emergency St. James Town has faced, residents have come together to support their neighbours and have demonstrated strong capacity and desire for community resilience; they are just missing the channels and organizational structures through which to execute it.

POLICY ALIGNMENTS IN CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

OASIS is an ideal food system, as defined by the *Toronto Food Strategy* (2018). It prioritizes health and environment. Accomplishes Toronto's strategic goals. Facilitates sustainable diets. Applies an ecological public health approach. Develops neighbourhood hubs with food access, affordability, and resilience in mind. And favours healthy and sustainable choices in its food pricing.

OASIS is part of Toronto's low-carbon future, as defined in the city's climate action strategy, *TransformTO* (2017). It contributes to reducing emissions and achieving "multiple community-wide priorities including poverty reduction, good quality jobs, healthy communities, and increased resilience to extreme weather (p.2). Adds to designs for near-zero emissions development and retrofitting existing buildings. Reduces food transportation emissions. Stimulates innovate collaborations with the private sector. And reduces residential waste.

OASIS is a sustainable food system, as defined by the *Milan Food Pact* (2015). It is inclusive. Resilient. Safe. Diverse. Provides governance systems for effective equitable action. Promotes and provides for sustainable nutrition. Strengthens social and economic equity. OASIS is a food cycle of production, supply, distribution, and waste.

OASIS moves urban agriculture forward in Toronto, as defined by the *GrowTO Urban Agriculture Plan for Toronto* (2012). It has all the motivating factors for urban agriculture: cost reductions, food justice, community growth, carbon footprint reduction, access to healthier and fresher food, mental health, and employment. Links growers to land and space. Strengthens education and training. Increases visibility and promotion of urban agriculture. Adds value to urban gardens – compost! Cultivates relationships and makes necessary the development of supportive policies and government action.

OASIS contributes to the preservation and protection of the environment for future generations, according to the Government of Ontario's *Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan* (2018). It helps support resilient families. Helps prepare communities for extreme weather and the effects of climate change. **Helps protect clean water.** Helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Activates the private sector (property management, construction and development, food). Reduces food waste from the landfills and promotes the reduction of litter in general. Protects soil and generates clean soil. Promotes recreational opportunities with food and nature.

POLICY ALIGNMENTS

OASIS contributes to a clean growth economy, as defined by the Federal Government of Canada in the policy document *Federal Actions for a Clean Growth Economy - Supporting the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* (2016). It advances agricultural management practices that help reduce emissions. Mitigates hazards and disasters by investing in infrastructure and advancing efforts to protect against flood damage. Seeks to work with Indigenous people, through community-based initiatives, to build capacity for adaptation action. Investing in OASIS is investing in climate-resilient infrastructure and integrated climate resilient building standards. Investing in OASIS is investing in the protection of health and well-being.

OASIS is sustainable development, as defined by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (2016). These goals (and 169 targets) are included in the Paris Agreement to combat climate change that Canada ratified a few months later. OASIS addresses poverty. Realises food security, improved nutrition, and sustainable agriculture. Ensures healthy lives and promotes wellbeing for all at all ages. **Produces inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all.** It is gender inclusive. Ensures availability of sustainable management of water and sanitation. Ensures access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy. Promotes sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work. OASIS is resilient infrastructure that promotes inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fosters innovation. Helps make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Promotes peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, and helps to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. Contributes to sustainable consumption and production patterns. Strengthens the means of implementing and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development through knowledge sharing and food exchange. Creating OASES is taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

OASIS is people adapting to climate change. OASIS mitigates further climate change, and disaster risk by fortifying disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. OASIS is healthy immigrant and refugee settlement. Healthy people. Green economy. Technology. Innovation. OASIS is a life-affirming realization to these policy commitments.

SECTION IV: METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine the feasibility and desirability of the OASIS Food Hub as a whole and as its respective components in the neighbourhood of St. James Town Toronto, as well as its replicability across diverse neighbourhoods. To complete a robust study, the team developed a mixed methodology iterative process that both examined the current food reality and needs in the neighbourhood, and also explored the feasibility and viability of partnerships and support systems necessary to make a project such as this thrive. This feasibility study combined qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis through a future-oriented lens. Below is an account of a Developmental Evaluation Framework that shaped the feasibility study, followed by a summary of the core components of the study detailing the specific methodologies used within each section.

Our feasibility study was conducted according to the principles of community-based research, and built on our previous research work, primarily our [Time Bank Feasibility Study](#) conducted in 2017 in partnership with St. Michael's Hospital and funded through the Dalla Lana School of Public Health Healthier Cities Seed Funding. Just as that study recognized, we recognize here too that the [community is a unit of identity](#), and that [successful community projects build on the "strengths and resources within the community, facilitate collaborative equitable partnerships, promote co-learning and capacity building, integrate and achieving a balance between research and action for all partners, emphasize local relevance of public health problems that incorporate the multiple determinants of health and cyclical and iterative process"](#) in order to "establish a long-term commitment to the project" (D'Souza et al., 2017).

DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION (DE)

To evaluate the progress of this feasibility study over the year in which it was conducted, the team used a developmental evaluation model. Developmental Evaluation is an emerging evaluation method rapidly gaining attention in community and social innovation work (Whaley & Weaver, 2010). Dozois et al (2010) describes the key difference between developmental evaluation and more traditional models of evaluation well, highlighting that *“the primary focus is on adaptive learning rather than accountability to an external authority”* and that the purpose of developmental evaluation *“is to provide real-time feedback and generate learning to inform development”*. In other words, in DE, *the process is the outcome*.

1) Understanding Innovation in Context

DE recognizes that context and innovation interact and co-evolve over time. This was certainly true for OASIS. Without confirmed space, the feasibility study team adapted our stakeholder map, targeted space possibilities, and adjusted the Food Hub plan to meet our changing context. Below are some documented examples of adaptation to context as the study progressed.

Space:

- a) The initial OASIS vision included the repurposing of an underused above ground swimming pool in the neighbourhood; however, through engagement with city offices, we learned that this pool was already been slated for demolition and transformation into public green space; and so, we adapted our focus to un-used below-grade pools. In this moment, we “fail smartly” and adapted to emergent conditions.
- b) We reached out to various site owners in the neighbourhood and adapted our focus according to interest. We received positive engagement for example from St. Simon and St. Peter’s Church, and so our plans adapted to meet the possibilities of that space, including the visioning of a medicinal and meditation garden which met the needs of both organizations but had previously not been included in our plans.
- c) Initial conversations with Wellesley-Parliament Square developers were positive with recognition of mutual benefit between developers, OASIS, and community; however, after the 650 Parliament St. fire in the summer of 2018, we had to temporarily halt conversations with these developers, and adjust our remaining study time to scoping the feasibility of other sites.

Political Context:

a) Over the course of this one-year study, the St. James Town political context went through significant changes. First, our MPP Glenn Murray, with whom we worked for a year and a half, stepped down from office and we were left without an MPP for many months. Second, our city councillor Pam McConnell suddenly passed away, and an interim city councillor was put in place for the few months leading up to city elections, at which point a third councillor was put in place. This meant we needed to engage from ground zero with each new councillor and adjust our timeline for securing support to meet the instability of our political environment. The provincial election also impacted this study, as possible core funding for OASIS, and Ministerial support was either paused or eliminated.

2) Adaptive Learning and Timely Decision-Making: in a way that late-stage evaluation cannot, DE encourages “learning quickly”.

Here are the key ways in which we employed this principle:

- a. Weekly Core Team Meetings: the volunteers, staff, and consultants who worked on this feasibility study had weekly check-in meetings to maintain consistency and adjust our plans to the changing contexts and dynamics surrounding the project.
- b. Seasonal Strategic Meetings: every three months, the core team conducted a strategic meeting which was open to all co-op members. At these meetings, we re-assessed and adjusted our timelines, talked through challenges, and conducted strategic action-planning using tools such as SWOT analyses, mind-mapping, and full team complex problem solving.
- c. Secondary Research: throughout this study, our team continued to research similar projects and initiatives from around the world and adjusted the OASIS model to replicate successes and pre-empt challenges other food projects have faced.
- d. Community Food Surveys: as we collected food surveys and met with residents our approach was shifted to meet our audience as we interacted. For instance, many residents required a volunteer/staff to fill in the survey with them, often reading out and explaining each question to meet English literacy needs, and time limits.

3) Inclusive, Participatory Approaches: well executed DE helps build relationships and increase learning capacity while boosting performance.

a. Design Charrettes: Over the course of the study, the project team along with our educational partner Conscious Minds Co-operative conducted three design charrettes that centered residents and co-op members with expert support, stakeholder and partner engagement. Findings are detailed in the next section; however, it is important to note here that it is through these gatherings project knowledge was shared with the community, and relevant actors contributed their experience, knowledge, values, and curiosity to the development of our final model.

b. Community Working Group: a resident working group was established to ensure resident voices were centered in this study. While time availability (see challenges) limited the engagement of this group, the core team also used phone calls, emails, and access to online drives to increase the accessibility of participation. We also hosted bi-weekly drop-ins in the community for co-op members and residents to keep informed and participating in the study.

c. Community Learning Opportunities: good inclusivity and participation includes learning, and throughout this study every effort was made to center learning within the confines of our resources. Learning included field trips to other urban food production projects in and outside the city. Further, our design charrettes were designed through community and adult education tools so that participants gained knowledge as well as contributed insights.

FEASIBILITY AREAS OF FOCUS:

To answer the question - *is a community-run, climate-resilient food hub generating healthy and affordable food feasible and desirable in St. James Town?* - the study assessed five areas, summarized in the chart below. More detailed descriptions can be found in the findings section.

Feasibility Area	Methodology Used	Key Numbers
Community Buy-In and Needs Assessment	Community Food Survey	193 Surveys; 145 completed; 48 partially filled in
	Design Gatherings	3 Gatherings with 35+ residents
	Youth Specific Design Gathering	1 with 15 participants through Wellesley Community Center Library
	Informational Drop-ins	At least twice a month, 30 in total
	Community Events	2 Social Dinners hosted, 1 candidates' debate, 4 community events tabled at
	Field Visits to Urban Food Production Projects	3: Black Farmers Collective, Naadmaagit Ki- Helpers of the Earth, Don Valley Foraging Walk
	Working Group Meetings	7 meetings with 6 resident members, 2 non-residents

Feasibility Area	Methodology Used	Key Numbers
Stakeholder and Political Support	Exploratory Meetings with TCHC	4 meetings
	Exploratory Meetings with Various City Councillors	5 meetings
	Exploratory Meetings with Tower Renewal and City Planning Officers	3 meetings + 4 public consultations
	Exploratory Meetings with Federal MP's Office	3 meetings
	Exploratory Meeting with Provincial MPP's Office	Successful Partnership established with: Community Matters, Cabbage Town Youth Center, Foodshare, Local Farm and Food Co-ops, National Farmers Union. Partnership conversations held with 5 more organizations.
	Community Partnership Exploratory Meetings	
	Exploratory Meetings with School Principals and Teachers	4 meetings: Rose Ave. Primary School (2), Our Lady of Lourdes (1), Winchester School (1)
	Weekly Outreach Tables at Community Center and Concourse	32 days between June-September 2018; weekly from September through April 2019
Possibility and Suitability of Location(s)	Exploratory Meetings with Site Owners	Toronto Community Housing, Wellesley Parliament Square (4), Churches in Neighbourhood
	Partnerships with Organizations for Regular Meeting and Food Pick-Ups	New Commons – Trinity Church, Cabbage Town Youth Center, Community Center
Technical Feasibility – Conducted by WaterFarmers	Secondary Research of Similar Initiatives	1 major report and detailed presentation produced
	Technical Specifics Developed from Expertise	
Financial Sustainability of Project	Development of Business Case through secondary research of similar initiatives, builds on Technical Study and previous analysis	One business case completed

SECTION V: FINDINGS

COMMUNITY BUY-IN AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY:

This is a summary of findings from the food surveys, design charrettes, community dinners, community field trips, and working groups.

Its desirable to have OASIS in St. James Town: 60% of respondents said they would join a food co-op if it meant increased access to healthy food; 72% of respondents said they would like to see food grown in St. James Town and local trusted farms.

We have preliminary market research data about what residents want from the surveys, for example, fish is currently price-inaccessible.

There is commitment to operationalize OASIS: The Bulk Food Buying was thought up in design charrettes, and now has start-up funding, pick up locations, and 5 resident-buyers; City Councillor Kristen Wong-Tam committed to championing OASIS.

OASIS Needs a Kitchen: There are a few in the neighbourhood but OASIS needs a dedicated kitchen 27/4; a kitchen provides key social enterprise opportunities, e.g. ready-made meals for emergencies, and for elderly people in the community who have difficulty cooking.

Full-food-cycle programming is an important quality of OASIS: produce turned to meals; green waste turned to compost to grow the produce.

Reconciliation and Right Relations: charrettes and farm tours raised the importance of treaties and partnership with Indigenous people and organizations.

Restoring wild spaces in the city is now an important element of OASIS: regenerating the land and restoring caring relationships between humans and nature was affirmed with excitement and passion from member-owners.

Residents enjoy farm tours because of the access to organic produce; recreational enjoyment; spiritual connection to land, and as future growers/farmers connecting to land and farmers.

KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED:

An Enabling Environment at Political and Administrative Levels: OASIS requires collaboration and innovative thinking across government offices who are used to working in silos.

Maintaining community engagement without secured space, funding, or city approval: the community is ready, but without resources, residents lack time; and, it is hard to maintain community engagement without further operationalization as there is a history of unfulfilled projects and promises in the neighbourhood.

FOOD SURVEYS

Objective: To study the food consumption and food needs of residents of St. James Town as it relates to the OASIS Food Hub.

Methodology: A survey was developed by the feasibility study core team, and questions were adjusted after 10 pilot surveys. The final survey was approved by the core team and working group members. Surveys were also made available in Hindi, Nepali, Farsi, and French but only English surveys were returned.

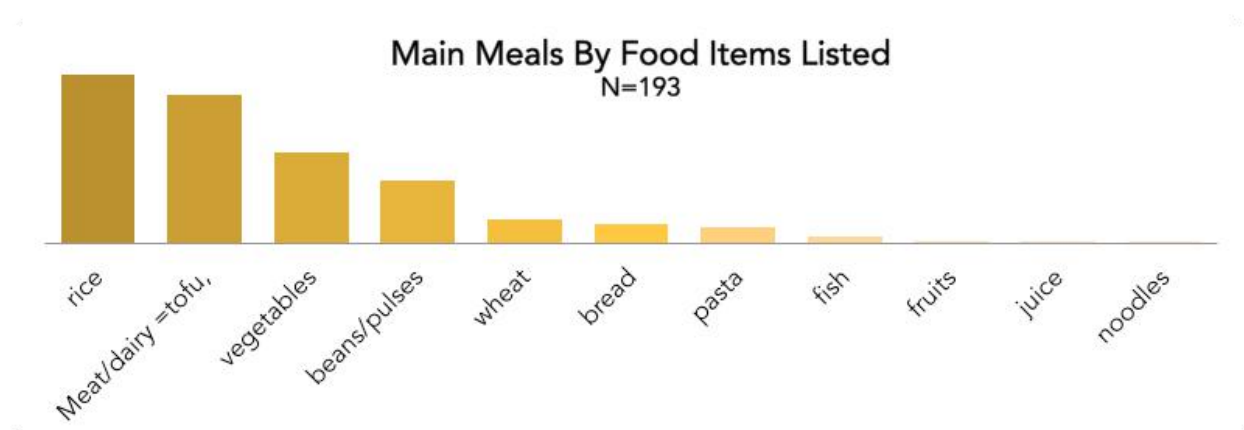
Data Collection: Data collection started in June 2018 and continued until February 2019. During the warm months, surveys were collected once a week in residential buildings lobbies and door to door outreach, as well as in the outdoor concourse next to Food Basics. Researchers decided to collect data from the 650 Parliament residential tower since the manager was cooperative and provided permission to conduct the survey in the lobby every week. During winter, a table was set up in the St. James Town library on Saturdays where researchers met the residents who visited the library and invited them to fill the survey. A box of questionnaires was also displayed in the library with drop-in a box, as well as available on the co-op's website. The surveys were also circulated during the charrettes.

Audience: All respondents were residents of St James Town between the ages of 16 to 60. Ninety-five percent of the respondents were decision makers in the homes about food. The respondents were from diverse ethnic backgrounds reflecting the composition of the neighbourhood.

Data Analysis: 193 surveys were returned, with 145 fully filled in and 48 partially filled. All the answers were put into Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, and charts created.

Results:

1. Please Describe Your Main Meal of The Day



Key food items in respondents' main meals included rice (30.6%), meat/dairy (26.9%) and vegetables (16.6%). The main meal of the day for residents was lunch or dinner.

2. What are some food items that give you feelings of comfort or happiness?

Food Items	% of Respondents
Rice	7.8
Fruits	7
Vegetables	7
Chicken	4
Sweet: Chocolate, Junk Food, Desserts, Pies Beans: Lentils, Beans Meat & Dairy: Beef, Pork, Eggs, Fish, Cheese Carbs: Pasta, Oatmeal, Bread, Potatoes, Spaghetti Specific Dishes: Casseroles, Grilled Cheese, Stews, Chinese Food, Hash Browns, Mashed Potatoes, Chapatti, Indian Nuts, Kebab, Soup, Pizza, Curry	Under 4%

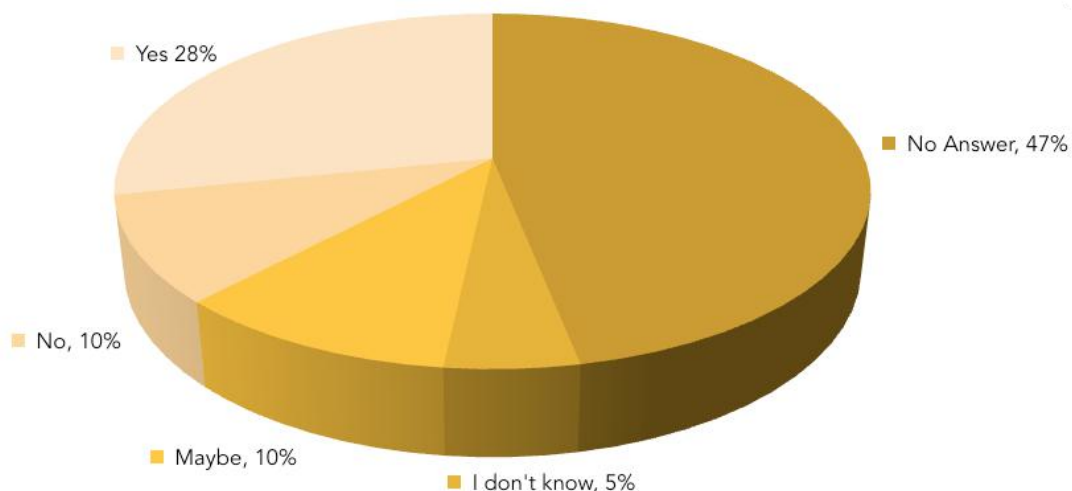
3. What are the top three food items that you eat in the categories below?

Grains	Beans/pulses	Vegetables
1. Rice (53)	1.Lentils (31)	1.Tomatoes (21)
2.Wheat (45)	2.Chickpeas (26)	2. Broccoli (20)
3.Oatmeal (8)	3. Kidney beans (15)	3. Potatoes and Spinach (17 each)
N=168	N=143	N=120
Herbs	Meat/Dairy	Nuts/Seeds
1. Cilantro (11)	1. Chicken (62)	1. Almonds (38)
2. Basil (9)	2. Beef (20)	2. Walnut (22)
3. Oregano and Parsley (8)	3. Pork (15)	3. Cashew (17)
N=67	N=157	N=114
Mushrooms	Fish and Seafood	Spices
1. Regular (15)	1. Shrimps, Tuna, Salmon (11 each)	1.Chilli (20)
2. Button & White (4)	2. Fish (8)	2. Pepper seeds (17)
3. Portobello & Cremini (3)	3. Crab (4)	3. Turmeric (12)
N=35	N=57	N=115

4. What food items do you have to travel out of St. James Town to buy?

Food Item	% of Respondents
None	47.1
Fresh Fish	7.4
Fresh Meat	5.9
Spices	4.4
Halal Meat, Indian Food Items	2.9
Asian Food, Baby Mustard, Brown Bread, Cheese Curds, Chinese Food, Ethiopian Food, Fresh Greens, Fresh Meat, Fresh Pork, Fresh Salmon, Fresh Water Fish, Gluten Free Foods, Korean Food, Organic Food, Red Meat, Russian Bread, Specialty Green Vegetables, Sugarcane, Various Types Of Pasta	1.5

5. Do you think that the price of any of these food items are too expensive?

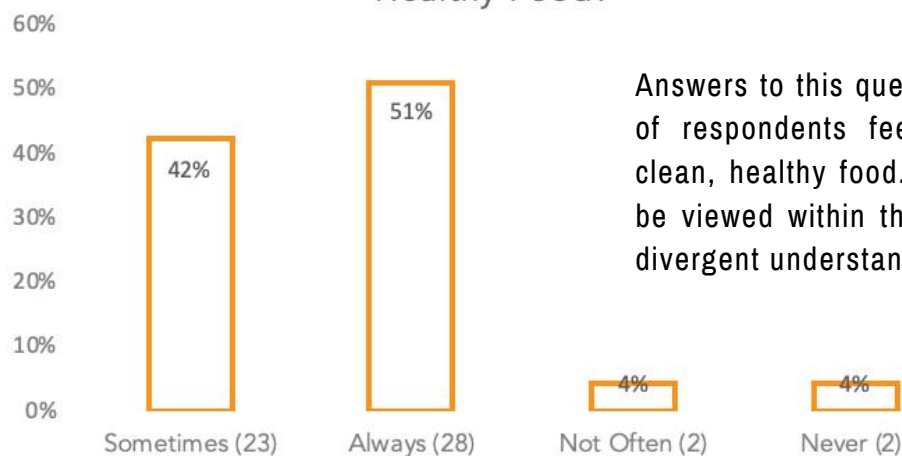


Over a quarter of the respondents said that the price of food items for which they have to go outside of St James Town to buy are expensive.

6. List of most expensive foods

Respondents felt that meat and fresh fish were most expensive followed by spices and seafood. This is followed by avocado, chicken, and vegetables.

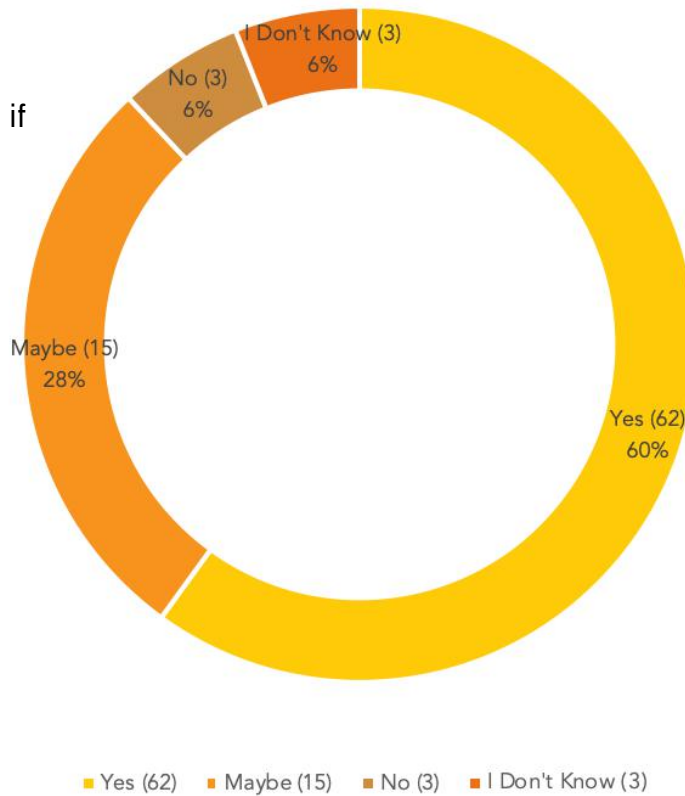
7. Do You Feel Like You Have Access to Clean Healthy Food?



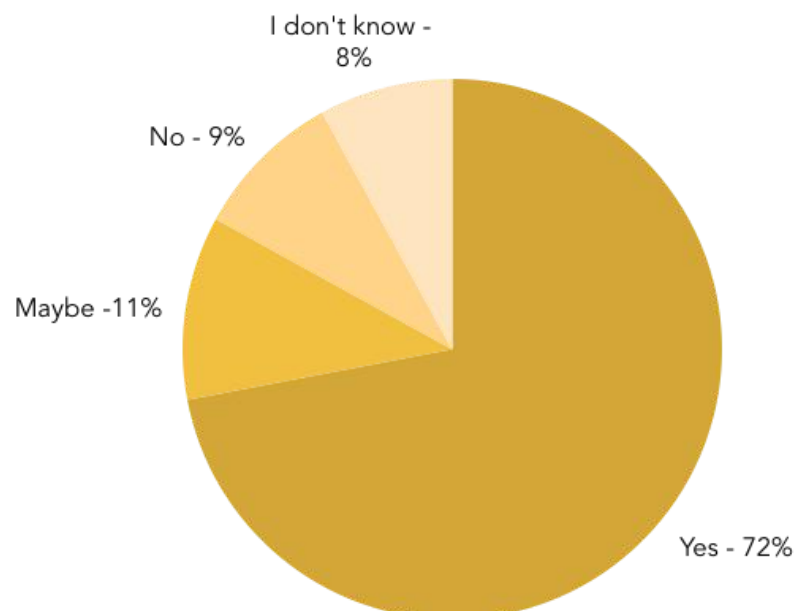
Answers to this question show that more than half of respondents feel that they have access to clean, healthy food. The results of this must also be viewed within the context of food literacy and divergent understandings of what healthy food is.

8. Would you join a food co-op if it increased your access to healthy, affordable food

88% of respondents would definitely or might join a co-op if it increased their access to healthy and affordable food. This demonstrates a strong desirability for the St. James Town Community Co-op.



9. Would You Like Your Food To Be Grown In St. James Town and Trusted Local Farms?

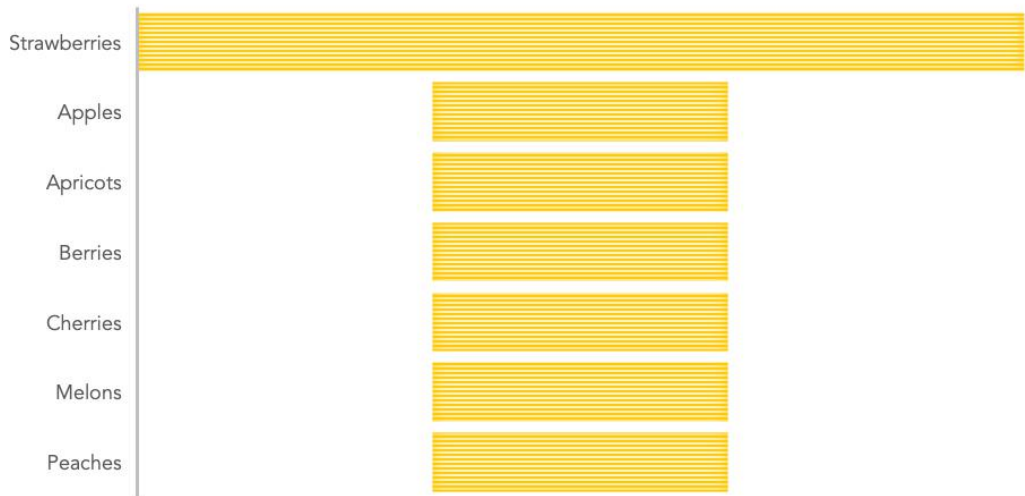


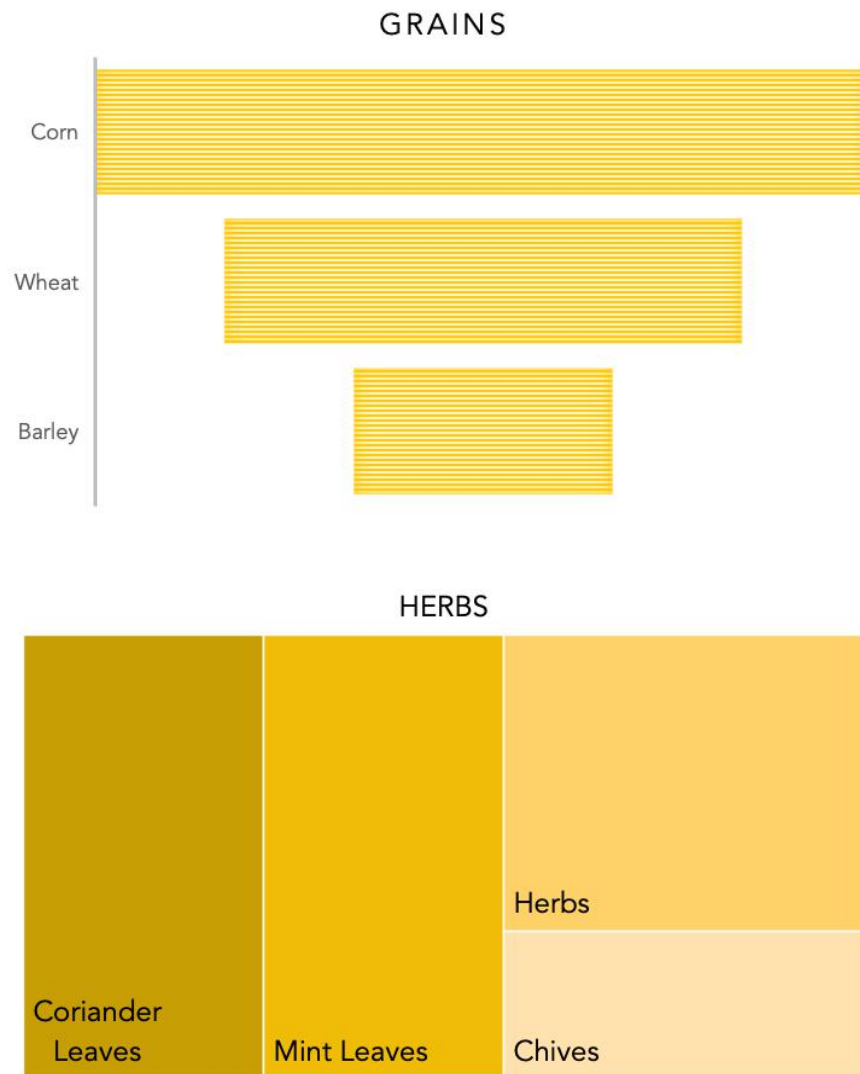
10. What plants or crops would you like to see grown in and for our community?

Vegetables



FRUIT





Discussion: The food survey highlights the desirability for a food co-op and locally produced food in the neighbourhood (question 4, 5, 8, and 9) with 60% of respondents saying they would join a food co-op, and 72% of respondents indicating a strong desire for neighbourhood and local food production. The survey also points to foods that OASIS will find a strong market in (question 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10):

- Rice
- Wheat
- Meat and Dairy (likely not produced in community but through partner farms)
- Fish (expensive and not as available in the community)
- Vegetables
- Fruit
- Herbs

However, more than half of respondents felt that they have access to clean, healthy food sometimes (42%) and always (51%). Through informal conversations, we believe that this number is skewed by divergent understandings of what makes food healthy and clean. If we were to do this survey again, it is the recommendation of researchers that a definition (see charrette results) should be included with this question, and results may differ.

DESIGN CHARRETTES

Objective: To engage residents and experts together in strategic planning and design of the food hub. To engage residents and experts together in strategic planning and design of the food hub.

Methodology: Designed and facilitated by Conscious Minds Co-operative – a youth-led not-for-profit co-operative focused on climate change and human rights education for youth and intergenerational people. Charrette plans were approved by the working group and core team and revised according to feedback given.

Data Collection and Audience: Each charrette held a specific focus and audience.

Charrette 1: Residents-and-Members-Only

Date: October 13th 2018

Location: Wellesley Community Center Room A

Participants: over 35 participants - residents, co-op members, and volunteers

Focus: Goals and Values; Food Processing and Selling (Kitchen and Storage)

Method: Short introductory presentation, informal individual written definitions to concepts posted around the room, facilitated break out groups to design kitchen and food processing zones.

Charrette 2: Residents-and-Members and Supporters

Date: November 17th, 2018

Location: Cabbage Town Youth Center

Participants: 33 participants, residents, co-op members, and representatives from partner organizations WaterFarmers, NFU, NKG, Foodshare, Community Matters, and individual supporters

Focus: Bulk Food Buying (prioritized in charrette #1), Food Processing, Food Growing, Composting

Method: Short introductory presentation, ice breaker, facilitated break-out group discussions using modified Flourishing Cities Canvas

Charrette 3: Residents-and-Members and Political Offices and City Staff

Date: February 8th, 2019

Location: Wellesley Community Center Room A

Participants: 24 including: Kristyn Wong-Tam, Representative of MPP Suze Morrison, Representative of MP Bill Morneau, Community Matters, TCHC Resident Engagement, Tower Renewal, St. Simon and St. Peter the Apostles Church, Community Members and Project Supporters

Focus: Acquiring Space, Possible Financing, Collaboration Among Stakeholders

Method: Short introductory presentation, presentation of technical report from WaterFarmers, Large Group Discussion on three focus areas with targeted questions and facilitation, individual notebooks for participants to take and return notes.

Youth Charrette: Wellesley Community Center Library Youth Group

Date: March 21st, 2019

Location: Wellesley Community Center

Participants: 15 youth from Jarvis Collegiate in grades 9 through 11

Focus: Youth Feedback on Broader Project

Method: Short introductory presentation, informal focus group interview and drawing

Data Analysis: For each charrette, Conscious Minds Co-operative harvested the data and produced a report which was sent to participants, and all co-op and project members.

Results...

1. Defining Key Pillar Values of OASIS – Charrette 1

We asked how residents and co-op members defined the following 5 pillars:

AFFORDABILITY / ACCESSIBILITY

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

HEALTHY FOOD

BY AND FOR COMMUNITY

SUSTAINABLE WORK AND EDUCATION



AFFORDABILITY / ACCESSIBILITY

- Organized access
- Sliding scale prices
- Located in community
- Balance, profitability, and low cost
- Available in local market
- Produced in local spaces
- Use of locally available inputs like compost
- Profit distribution (dividend system)
- Creation of a sustainable fund to develop projects
- Cut out middle scale of distribution
- Create alliances with food distributors to pass over products that are still good

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

- Locally grown good
- Energy efficient technology
- Sustainable materials (cloth over plastic)
- Having solar panels
- More produced than consumed
- Disaster preparedness and mitigation
- Shipping containers have pros and cons
- Drawing from nature / biomimicry
- Water

HEALTHY FOOD

- Healthy veggies
- Organic, WHOLE foods – fruits, veggies, grains
- Fresh
- Culturally familiar spices
- Plant-Based
- Chemical-free
- From field to kitchen
- Fresh from the farm
- Locally produced
- Good for the land and body
- Foods we can get fast
- It helps me grow
- Cultural food considered
- Cooked consciously with love
- Best priced food



BY AND FOR COMMUNITY

- A welcoming place
- Everyone is a genius
- Awareness raising
- Accountability
- Free flow of information
- Organic system
- To encourage participation, things should be fun!
- Affirming the assets in the community first, then go to allies to fill the gaps
- When there are job opportunities, residents get priority!
- Involve women, seniors, and kids in decision-making
- Assessment of local spaces available to grow food
- Involve local people in food assessment
- Involve women who are at home with their kids

SUSTAINABLE WORK AND EDUCATION

- Time Bank
- Based on Nature's Designs
- Rely on volunteers at the start
- Shared info among diverse peoples
- Employs residents
- It all starts with community consciousness and raising awareness
- Economy revolves within the community
- Workshop on Recycling and compost – encourage waste separation in buildings



2. Visioning A Community Kitchen and Food Storage – Charrette #1

ST. JAMES TOWN KIDS FOOD HUB

children at the gathering thought about...

- *Who's going to work there?* People in the community who don't have jobs
- *What kind of jobs do we need?* Driver, grower, composter, distributor
- *Who can work there?* People who don't have jobs, people who already have jobs can still purchase food
- *What happens to the farmers if we grow all our food here?*
- *What can we grow?* Tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, strawberries, bananas, apples, oranges, mangoes, watermelon
- *What about people who can't afford to pay?* We should have a box of free things, and a piggy-bank for people to put extra money into that goes to other members, friends, and family who need it
- *How are we going to package the food?* Paper bags, cardboard boxes
- *How should we store the food?* In a big van, need a cooling and heating system, in the snow
- *Who's going to buy the food?* Everyone, not just in the neighbourhood
- *When should we be open?* 11am-5pm, then 6-10pm



Food Storage and Distribution

- There is only so much we can design as the Community Co-op searches for the right space for OASIS. Maybe we start in unused (sub)basement space, maybe in a shipping container...
- \$3,000 – the cost of a shipping container, \$5000 with renovations
- Ideally we find space in a basement but only if it is as affordable as the container



What would we sell?

- Products based on what the community likes
- What farmers can grow easily/profitably
- Accessible ready-made meals
- Bring your own container
- Products with long shelf-life
- Root Vegetables
- Mushrooms
- Dry Goods
- Milk/Eggs
- Self-sustaining foods
- Foods readily available from the wild
- Then, organic compost for local growing and farms

Humble Beginnings: Start with small group
of people and take orders/pre-sales

Hours of Operation: Weekends All Day
Weekdays: Select Days and Times
For: Co-op members, residents, and allies

Resources We Need

Space: basement or shipping container

Truck: Cut down on transportation costs, be able to get food directly from the farm

Security: Wherever it is placed, we need good security

Volunteers: People within the community forming leadership and work experience

How are we acquiring supply?

Buying or helping to *harvest local produce*, transport it back to the community
– need a smart transportation strategy

Getting food by barrels from links in Jamaica such as wild-sourced ginger and turmeric for exchange of work-boots and money

Community Kitchen

We can use kitchens that already exist to start these activities on the small scale – like St. Paul and St. Simon’s, Rose Ave. and Winchester School, Sherbourne Health Center – but, ultimately, **we need our own community kitchen that can be accessed every day.**

Inputs

- Fresh vegetables and fruits
- Raw lentils, beans masalas, yogurt, rice
- Ideally, farmers bring food directly to St. James Town
- We should have a truck to pick up food too
- Donations from Distributors

Education & Workshops

- Inter-cultural learning: recipe sharing
- Healthy eating and food preparation
- Emergency Preparedness education
- Growing food in your apartment
- Fall Season: Making Preservatives

Selling

- Dry Foods – dehydrated prepared meals that can be stored for a long-time
- Catering
- Café where residents can gather
- Cultural menus – different cuisines every day or week
- Need special taste to draw people in
- Pay what you can with minimum fee: e.g. \$2

Important Features

- Job creation
- Affordable Healthy Meals
- Green waste transformed into compost



Vermicomposting

Charrette 1



Taste Mobile Kitchen, Australia 2002 - shipping container kitchen example

3. Flourishing Cities Canvas – Charrette #2

OASIS Design Gathering #2

Flourishing Cities Canvases

	Bulk Food Buying	Food Processing	Food Growing	Composting
Resources and People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Info from food survey results • Foraging the Don river and surrounding natural environment • Parliament storefront to handle and distribute food • Co-operative structure – finding sustainability by starting with a small group of people that grows with interest • Time credits – split food costs between time credits and money, lower farm costs with labour (and compost) <p>Actors & Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St James Town residents and co-op members • National Farmers Union (NFU) • Urban farmers, buyers <p>Needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space for storage • Research into policy, health guidelines, by-laws, and storage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favourite foods from food survey • Cold basements (temperature) • Customers in St. James Town • Readymade meals – breakfasts, sandwiches • Perishables can be benefit to market for cheap food • Community is a co-op – we have both repeat customers, and access to first-time customers <p>Actors & Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ella – architectural drawings / website • Rita – experience in resource management and business planning • Wayne Roberts • National Farmers Union • Sue Car • Strong community relationships • Local community centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden on Rose Ave 3-bin compost system • Possible food growing spaces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Ravines, green spaces ◦ Neighbourhood walls and roofs (i.e. vertical growing) — Rose Ave, Food Basics, CYC ◦ Basements, sub-basements ◦ underground pools, garages, squash courts, gym space – 100,000 sq. meters ◦ mostly abandoned spaces • Dish with One Spoon Treaty <p>Actors & Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St James Town residents • schools, churches, community organizations • Scadding Court • Cabbagetown Youth Centre • those with in-depth knowledge on types of garden systems – i.e. ash in soil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste/food scraps to sell or use for OASIS growing systems • Yard waste, decomposition • Food waste becomes organic fertilizer • Worms – naturally reproduced in vermicompost • Worm quality soil • “ugly” veggies collection – repurpose in kitchen and sell as prepared food • Compost bins outside Shoppers? • Co-operative model <p>Actors & Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. James Town residents, co-op members, individuals sorting personal waste • Scadding Court • Water Farmers • Green Thumb • Community Matters • Vermicompost technology / design organizations • Stakeholders: Local schools, churches, organizations, businesses, neighbouring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show concrete examples and effects and increase visibility of this project • raise morale 	<p>Needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shipping container • Website for online order processing • Media and marketing • Accountant • Building designer • inspector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • surrounding environment/community <p>Needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-10 people to staff growing • 23K acres • 18 buildings • 1000 petition signatures • 60 active members 	<p>communities, private developers and the ‘new development</p> <p>Needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smell-proof compost containers • Underground space • People to pickup waste buckets from buildings, yard waste • Pest and odour control

	Bulk Food Buying	Food Processing	Food Growing	Composting
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to source farm, NKG and other groups about how to preserve food properly in traditional low-energy ways • Steps: Call out to members → Start Food Buying Club → Talk to NFU → Set central contact person → Work with Scadding Court for space → Cooking class with bulk items when food arrives → Knowledge sharing • As Food Buying Club develops, tap community knowledge for food storage and preservation • Farmers train community – commitment to grow educational programs <p>Channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foodshare – can bring the food to the people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase shelf life by dehydrating, pickling, making hot meals or frozen meals • Workshops on health benefits, how to cook different items we sell • Educate on healthy food and community <p>Channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markets – Bare Market, Cabbagetown Market, or buy leftovers after markets are over • Foraging • Food donations • Workshare in exchange for food • Button jar / pay it forward system for purchasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going back and considering how native species have thrived in the area when building gardens and harvesting eco-systems • Construction of apartment-sized compost bins • Residents create compost: → bring to us for vouchers → compost to farms → discounts on food sold to co-op <p>Channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Composting Program • Schools and education • Waste and unsellable food collection and distribution • Yard waste collection • Foodshare sells black gold compost \$5 a bag • Underground storage of food – storing near source and preserving for extended periods (ex. Halloween pumpkins) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community education on how to sort our own waste • Strategies for participation that include clear payoff • Research what composting exists so far • Government assistance for managing waste • Community Composting Program <p>Channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste and unsellable food collection and food distribution • Composting service for schools and local businesses • School programs to help with collection, distribution, processing • Yard waste collection • Manure tea – to sell • Selling worms (naturally reproduced in vermicompost) • Selling compost fertilizer liquid
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could order through Direct Co-op • Collaborate with group and Scadding to get into buildings to outreach • Time and work credits 			



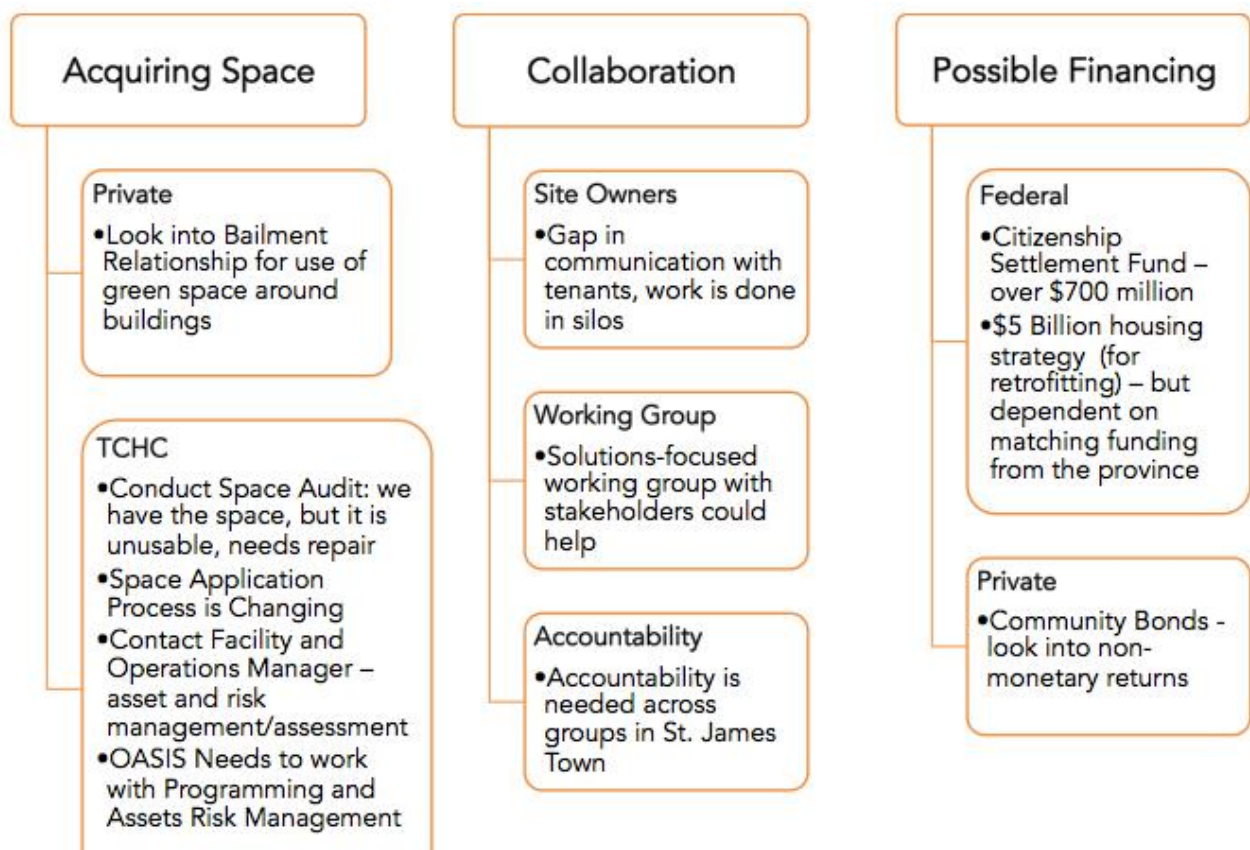
	Bulk Food Buying	Food Processing	Food Growing	Composting
Accountable to...	<p>Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial capital to purchase food Space where food will be dropped off/picked up Down the road: preserving fresh food and prepared meals Scadding court Root Cellar – engage in bulk buying together Food distribution plans (as we grow) Transportation to/from farms <p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring community-relevant food Connecting urban farmers/buyers, maintaining consistency for both <p>Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of relevant city by-laws Talk to Fresh City and Mama 	<p>Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Packaging – need brown paper bags Shelf life Rent, maintenance fees Start-up fees, appliances Time volunteering <p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holiday-focused events focusing on diverse holidays Workshare in exchange for food, pay it forward system Promote other people's companies, give publicity to those doing business with us Togetherness, diversity, inclusion <p>Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay taxes Will probably need a car park (law every business has to have parking space) Other types of building codes – water, electricity, fire 	<p>Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start-up costs Operational money Staffing Rent leases Affordable food <p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance between native species and culturally relevant foods Pilot that includes seniors, youth and new Canadians Fresh Fruit Delivery pilot program Growing good food Considering the value that the few green spaces that exist have to residents <p>Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal: Skills development, Depts of Environment, Labour, Agriculture, Bill Mourneau Provincial: Ministries of Labor, Agriculture, Environment, Health, MNAH, Indigenous Affairs 	<p>Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compost container for every household unit and/or building Personnel to collect waste and maintain system Lessened- environmental costs / landfill decomposition Lessened- tipping fees for building management <p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training programs Channels for easy participation Community education on compost and waste management <p>Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoning laws Funding agents Tax payers, City of Toronto
	<p>Earth about by-laws, licensing, and health checks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food safety and health regulations <p>Business & Revenue Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buy Second and Third Best crops from farmers – talk to NFU Aggregate funds across organizations 	<p>Business & Revenue Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low cost for customers/co-op members Getting our visibility out there by hosting field trips Having high-end products to balance low-cost products Perishables by order, non-perishables in a surplus 	<p>Labor, Agriculture, Environment, Health, MNAH, Indigenous Affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal: Tower Renewal, TCHC, skills development, Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) <p>Business & Revenue Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 years until growing is profitable leverage numbers of prepared meals business Municipal funds MOE < MOL skills development, training Individuals can apply for second funding 	<p>Business & Revenue Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect food waste from people (for free) and businesses (small cost) to compost and sell (quality soil, worms, fertilizer)

4. Key Insights from Charrette #3

OASIS received a warm reception from participants in the third charrette – it was mentioned by several participants that a lot productive hard work put into OASIS, and **what is needed now**, in the words of Kristyn Wong-Tam, **is to “operationalize the project”**. The tone of the large group discussion was collaborative and hopeful, yet aware of the difficulty of the coordinated collaboration this project requires across groups, particularly across and within institutional offices that normally work in silos. It was agreed that significant investment is needed into the infrastructure of this neighbourhood in order to facilitate access of existing space for the OASIS Food Hub in particular, and the residents in general.

From Kristyn Wong-Tam: City Councillor Wong-Tam gave a speech to start off the large group discussion, in which she expressed her support of this project, and pledged to be the champion of OASIS in city hall. She noted that **as a neighbourhood, St. James Town has an incredible depth knowledge from different parts of world, and there is huge potential to mobilize it and export this idea beyond the neighbourhood**. Our timing is perfect, and she feels excited about multiple benefits of OASIS such as harvesting untapped assets, skills training, and food security. Much of what OASIS proposes is in line with the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact to which Toronto is signatory. However, we need to show neighbourhood and co-op can maintain this project over time; suggested to start with a proof of concept (not too big, not too small).

Below are the key suggestions given by participants:



5. Insights from Youth-Specific Design Gathering

Where do you think the food hub should be in the neighbourhood?		
Roof top and underground growing sounds really cool	On top of the new pool at the community center	The pool behind 200 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raised by youth present, not prompted• Great Greenhouse

↓

What would you like to grow?		
Mangoes	Strawberries	Cucumbers

↓

How do you think we could make St. James Town a green neighbourhood?	
More Parks	More Green Space

↓

What would you like to see in the parks in St. James Town?		
More swings	More seating	A pond (for swans)



Proposal - Draft Plan - 'Medicine Wheel Common'



Relationships - A childrens free play area - Adventure Playground



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Over the course of the study, we hosted several community events related focused on building social relationships and enjoyable learning experiences with food.

Farm Tours and Ravine Walk

It is a regular practice of the café-turned-cooperative to run farm tours in the summer where residents can meet farmers, get their hands in the soil, and have an enjoyable day outside the city.

Here is a reflection from a summer student who helped to organize our June 24th tour to **Black Farmers Collective** in Milton:



Amidst the rain and mud, we walked through the farm and saw the hard work of the collective. The farmers exhibited the importance of growing locally farmed and sustainable food. Cabbage, leeks, beets, tomato, fennel, callaloo, and onion are just a few of the produce grown on the land showing that it is possible, feasible, and necessary to grow food within an urban area. Chatting to the farmers and listening to them speak on food issues made us realize that even within our city of Toronto, food security is a serious issue...

...We must change the food system from one where it's easy and convenient to eat unhealthy fast food toward one where everyone is able to afford and access good clean local food. It is up to us to be resilient and reach out to our local farmers and representatives to foster sustainable community development by supporting local farming, both in the urban city of Toronto and in rural areas. Regardless of class or background, we all need healthy and affordable food, no one can dispute this.

-Bianca C., St. James Town Co-op Website Blog

On July 28th, we went on a tour of the lands that **Naadmaadgit Ki Group** is taking care of near the Humber River. Here are some reflections from the day:

Although our group was small — no more than 8 people — it happened to be the perfect size for the tour, down to the number of shovels that Doug brought with him. Fortunately, the weather was also cooperating with us that day and held off on both rain and sun to give us a comfortable setting for a tour and some restoration work.

As we walked through the land, Doug and Aaron talked about their indigenous relationship to the land; Doug told us to imagine that the whole area is a garden! We also got a chance to help out by removing some invasive common reeds that are threatening to engulf the side of the Humber River banks; it was hard work but rewarding as we looked back at what we had accomplished in over 30mins time.





“When I saw the work that NKG was doing it seemed like an overwhelming task. My most significant moment was when we were clearing an invasive grass species beside the Humber River. I think I might have helped pull out ten stalks. Our guide, Doug, was appreciative of the contributions we had made. I am sure that I did very little! As I got to know more about the vision of the group for the area, it made me realize that indeed, this was a perfect metaphor for the Oasis Community Food Hub. In order to have the endurance and perseverance, one must be energized by a vision. It was not just about pulling out the invasive weeds beside the river bank but it is seeing the vision of what the place could be for the indigenous peoples in the future. Similarly, one could easily get discouraged if nothing seems to be happening in the accomplishment of an Oasis Community Food Hub, but the vision must inspire a persistent action.”
St. James Town Co-op Website Blog

On August 3rd, 2018, inspired by our NKG visit, the St. James Town Community Co-op led a [plant identification walk through the lower Don Valley](#). We were fortunate to be joined by knowledgeable and enthusiastic community members who shared their own perspectives and expertise to our walk. Among the plants we identified were Jewelweed, which can be used to treat rashes and irritations; Japanese Knotweed, a hardy invasive plant that acts as a cleanser for the liver, kidneys, and digestive tracts; and Wild Grape Vine, a native plant that can strangle and kill trees if left to grow without human stewardship. We also had informative discussion on the nuances of removing invasive species, particularly whether or not invasive species should be taken out of an ecosystem if they fill their ecological niche more effectively than their native counterpart. We ended the walk with a visit to the Evergreen Brickworks, and participants were excited to learn that there would be more walks to come!



We also hosted two community social dinners, one at Our Lady of Lourdes on 18th July 2018, and a second at the Cabbage Town Youth Centre, March 27, 2019. While the dinners were a wonderful way to bring together the community around this project, it was reminiscent of the early days of the Community Café, and reinforced the need to have our own kitchen and social space. The logistics of finding space and kitchen access meant that the dinners were delayed multiple times and staff and volunteers had to put in significant extra labour to make them happen.

Political Engagement: City of Toronto Candidates Debate

St James Town Community Co-op and CREW hosted a candidates' forum on Community Resilience and Emergency Planning for ward 13 city council candidates on Oct 17th, 2018 at the Church of St. Peter and St. Simon in St. James Town. We invited all the candidates who were running for councilor to the forum and we had five questions prepared in advance for the candidates to answer. There were 9 candidates present at the debate. Though with some tension, we had insightful conversations with candidates on what community resilience looks like to them and how to best prepare for emergency situations in St. James Town.

WORKING GROUP MEETINGS AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the feasibility study, the core team established a working group of residents, whose role it was to guide the project team and ensure **community voice remained at the center of this project**. Our original plan was to have a group of 10-15 residents who would meet monthly, review the work being done, give feedback, and assist in the planning of events and research. While we encouraged tens of people in the community who were eager to be a part of a living and breathing OASIS, we faced challenges in sustaining a dedicated group. For example, one of our members has a strong educational background and experience in compost and has supported the co-op garden and grant applications for a bigger composting project; but, with three kids and a need for income, this member was unable to join regular meetings or sustain commitment on a volunteer basis. This type of engagement verifies the need to fund the growth stages of this project until it is able to employ its own staff through revenue. **The need to compensate people for their work also highlights a role that timebanking would play in valuing people's work and generating benefits.**

Our working group consisted of eight people, six of whom are residents, who met seven times over the course of the study. Members came from careers and professional occupations including structural engineering, electrical engineering, and academic researchers. Members of the working group gave feedback on the design charrettes overarching structures, provided input on a community outreach strategy, helped with grant writing, and periodically give feedback on drafts of the technical report. Given the demands of life, and the limited resources, we are confident that this small group shows evidence of a community ready for this project but in need of support to be able to engage fully.

The St. James Town Co-op has a membership list of 150 people, each of whom at one point or another contributed a \$5 membership fee to the co-op, showing a level of commitment and interest in the community food work of the co-op. Throughout the study, we received regular feedback from our members that **after 6 years of discussing this project, they are ready for action, and the majority want to see space or funding commitment to ensure them that this is not just another unfulfilled dream/promise made to the community**. In all of our co-op interactions, it has been increasingly difficult to get members out to planning and design meetings. Due to the dynamic nature of the community and high turnover rate in terms of residents, our membership has also waxed and waned in relation to people's movement in and out of the neighbourhood. To ensure that the recent wave of interest in the project is not wasted, we need to take advantage of this push of activity from the feasibility study. **The St. James Town community and the Co-op are ready for the next stage of OASIS.**



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Summary

Throughout the feasibility study, OASIS developed formal partnerships with three organizations working in St. James Town, and gained a second trustee for further OASIS grants. We did not have any success engaging with the Service Provider's Network; however, received positive responses from other community and food organizations. Farm organizations and co-ops were also positively engaged in developing a supply chain for food procurement.

We were unable to secure definite space for OASIS but identified two optimal locations for components of OASIS: the pool underneath 325 Bleeker St., and below and above grade space in the proposed Wellesley Parliament Square Developments. Dialogues on space were stunted by political leadership changes, and the 650 Parliament fire that happened early into our study.

Land Owners and Property Managers

At the beginning of this study, there was no confirmed space for the OASIS Food Hub. Unfortunately, this still remains the case; however, there has been significant progress in identifying the most probable spaces for OASIS in St. James Town, as well as ruling out an option that was thought viable pre-study.

In search of space, the OASIS team took a two-pronged approach which sought partnership with private as well as public lands. Below is an account of the meetings and insights discovered:

1) Publicly Held or Managed Lands

Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC):

Applying for this feasibility study funding, we had already had two meetings with TCHC staff, facilitated through former MPP Glenn Murray's office. We requested a letter of support for this study but were denied due to concerns they had about potential risks (such as pest management) and required "a more fulsome proposal for consideration".

Since the study has begun, we have attempted to schedule meetings and follow up with TCHC staff; however, and likely due to high staff turn-over and organizational restructuring during the period of this study, they were unable to make any decisions related to their properties, and many of our emails and phone call follow-ups went unanswered.

A TCHC staff in Tenant Programming did attend our third charrette, and noted two things: first, that TCHC is going through more changes in their programming protocols; and second, that there is significant unused below-grade space that could be used for tenant programming but is currently in disrepair and needs significant retrofitting to be safe for the public.

Through meetings with city planning staff, we have learned that the pool behind 200 Wellesley St. is scheduled for demolition and to be turned into green park space. Since learning this plan is approved by City Council, we and have refocused our search for space on below-grade pools under TCHC management.

It is the opinion of the feasibility study team that the most viable space in TCHC properties for OASIS is the below-grade pool under 325 Bleeker St.

City Land

Another potential site for retail and kitchen components of OASIS are on city land, particularly the unnamed strip of concrete pedestrian space leading from Wellesley St. to Howard St., which passes by the Food Basics, the pool behind 200 Wellesley St. and Rose Ave. Primary School.

Prior to this study, we had begun to request City approval for a temporary shipping container structure while we waited for more permanent space. In our exploratory meetings, we have gotten no closer to a 'yes', but have learned that Tower Renewal is leading a shipping container market in that same location and are in a feasibility study stage; we have yet to be contacted for consultation or collaboration, though we are in regular contact with Tower Renewal.

2) Private Space

At the beginning of the study we sent out communication to various private site owners, but only received positive engagement from Wellesley Parliament Square developers, and so, our focus in the study was on the viability of securing space on this site. Wellesley-Parliament Square consists of six buildings and significant underground space. They are currently applying to the city for permission to refurbish existing buildings, and build three new high-rise towers.

We began productive dialogue with Brooke Pooni, the urban planning consultant hired by the developers for public consultations and associated work. After two meetings, we met with the lead architect of the project and the current property manager. Conversations were highly encouraging. The developers had decided not to re-develop the below-grade space; and so, concepts of underground mushroom growing, and compost processing were very well received. It was acknowledged that these two initiatives would be mutually beneficial, and that composting could significantly reduce building costs.

However, on August 21st, 2018, there was a six-alarm fire in their property 650 Parliament St., which led to the displacement of over 1,500 residents, many of whom are still to this date (April 2019) unable to move back into their apartments. Due to this fire, developers significantly pulled back in their development work, and all conversations between OASIS and Wellesley Parliament Square came to a temporary halt.

In conversation with the city planner in charge of this development in Spring 2019, we discussed the possibility of gaining a community kitchen and office space in one of the new buildings through Section 37 community space agreements; however, this remains speculative until the city and developers reach an agreement, and developers commit in full to housing OASIS.



St. James Town Building Owner Map

Other Community Organizations Working in St. James Town

Organization	Engagement	Result
Community Matters	Recognized mutual goals and aspirations for the community C.M. provides food handlers license trainings and food markets; and could link trained residents in with OASIS Kitchen to support resident social-enterprises. Co-hosted community dinner	Formal partnership created
Cabbagetown Youth Center	Recognized mutual goals and aspirations for the community Youth center is in transition period Mutual benefit possible in programming and space use Co-hosted a community dinner	Formal partnership created Agreed to be pick up site for bulk food buying club
St. Simon and St. Peter the Apostles Church	Has a certified kitchen and good community space, but runs own programs Wants to support St. James Town especially in emergencies, this partnership could be a good way in which to do so	Partnership agreed to in principle, not formalized Agreed to be pick-up site for food buying club Possible site for garden
Trinity Church – New Commons	Opened during the feasibility We ran drop-ins and community meetings here.	Agreement in space use partnership
Our Lady of Lourdes Church	Used for social dinner and community meetings	No formal partnership established
Aunty Amal's Community Centre	Shared values Supported in outreach	No formal partnership established
Wellesley Community Center	Hosted our weekly outreach Supportive of efforts Facilitated Our Youth Design Session Library Staff attended Charrettes	No formal partnership established, but long-term supporter
Schools	Study staff met with staff from all three schools in the neighbourhood General interest in the food hub, but schools were focused on supporting families affected by the 650 Parliament Fire within the timeframe	

	of this study	
Service Providers Network	Aware of OASIS before study began Continued to reach out for collaboration over the course of the study Invited to 2nd and 3rd charrette – no organization responded or attended	No formal support or partnership established.
	Non-Neighbourhood Specific Organizations	
National Farmers Union	Collaborated on farmers dialogue: climate change and the food system Support in principle Can connect farmers directly to market in St. James Town	Support in Principle Formal Partnership currently in development
Local Food and Farm Co-ops	OASIS team member was keynote at annual members meeting Channel for direct purchasing from farmer co-ops Shared vision of sustainable urban-rural food system	Support in Principle Formal Partnership currently in development
Foodshare	Shared vision Supportive of OASIS, attended Charrettes 2 and 3	Trustee Agreement Signed
CREW	Also conducted pilot project for climate hub Brought into St. James Town through the Co-op Shared goals for community resilience to emergency and extreme weather Attended charrette 1 and farm tours	Formal partnership
Black Farmers Collective	Interested in accessing St. James Town market Interested in paying for farm support in time credits and selling food to co-op members for part money part time credits Successful sold produce to co-op members for part time credits part money	Supporter and possible partner; non formal agreement reached.
Naadmaadgit Ki Group – Earth Helpers	Visited and Support their restoration and farming efforts Founder is willing to support any garden or wild space restoration work in St. James Town Members attended Charrette 2	Mutually supportive, no formal partnership.

Relevant Government Bodies

As described in the methodologies section, the feasibility study team continued to meet with neighbourhood representatives and relevant staff offices at the Municipal, Provincial, and Federal levels of government.

We are scheduled for a meeting with city departments, and TCHC decision-makers at the end of May 2019 organized by Councilor Wong-Tam's office.

City of Toronto

- Met with Lucy Triosi, July 2018
- Held Ward Candidates Debate September 2018
- Met with Kristyn-Wong Tam, April 2019
- Met with City Planning, April 2019

Provincial Government of Ontario

- Had no MPP from July 31st, 2017 until provincial elections in June 2018
- Met with Suze Morrison, received support in principle
- MPP staff attended Charrette 2

Federal Government of Canada

- Met with Bill Morneau Staff, Summer 2018, February 2019
- Requested:
 - A letter of support and a commitment to continue to come to the table to discuss this hub with other relevant government levels
 - Funding: Capacity Building - support in researching and accessing Skills Development funding to train up 10 residents in order to sustain the beginning developments
 - Funding: Building Retrofit - support in researching and accessing funding to prepare existing spaces in St. James Town for larger food production, waste management, and education/training
- Have yet to hear back despite multiple emails and phone calls to follow up.

SECTION VI: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

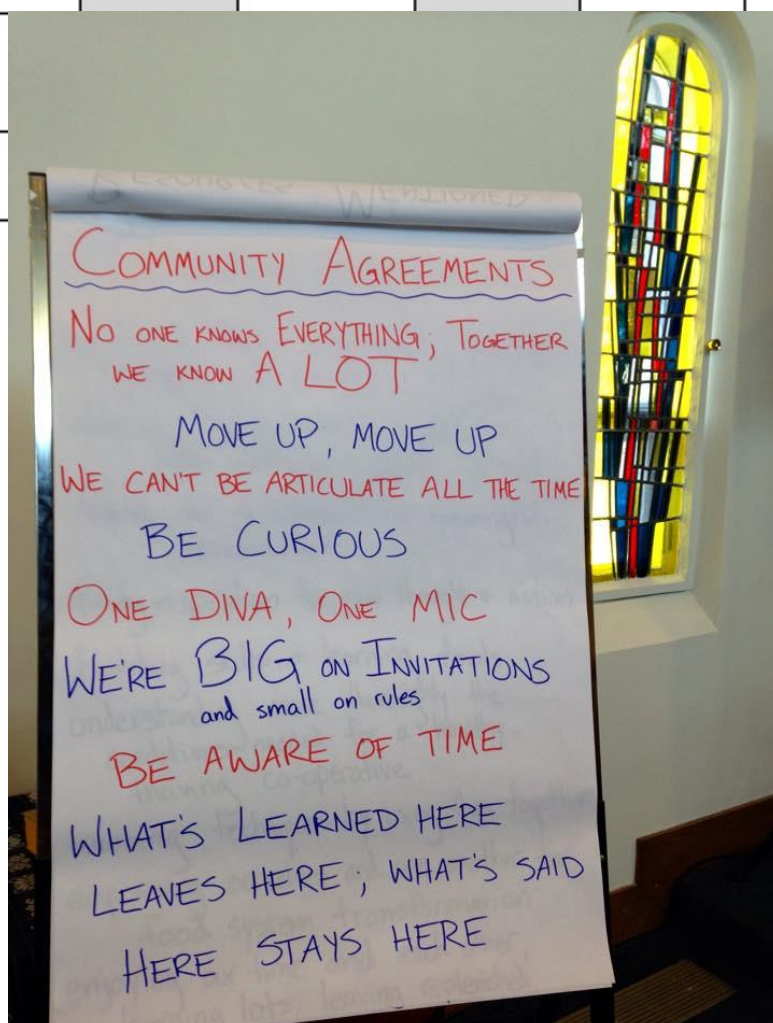
Key performance indicators were developed by a contracted staff and were informed by design charrettes, strategic meetings, and core team contributions. The performance indicators are currently under review by St. James Town Community Co-operative members and Board of Directors.

Food System Component		1.Food Production	2.Food Distribution	3.Food Processing	4.Food Consumption	5.Food Recycling	6.Food & Climate Change
Impact Area		Community Urban Agriculture	Cooperative Food Procurement	Community Kitchen	Communal Dining	Communal Composting	Community Food Resilience
Social Impact	Bench Marks-KPI						
1	Participation						
2	Retention Rates %						
3	Participant Ethno-Diversity						
4	Retention Rates %						
5	Gender Diversity						
6	Retention Rates %						
7	Capacity and Skill Building Opportunities						
8	Leadership Roles						
9	Retention Rates %						
10	Advisory and Decision Making Opportunities						
11	Partnerships Created						
12	Local/ Community Partners						
13	Institutional Partners						
14	Global Partners						
15	Local Business Partners						
16	Regionals Business Partners						
Economic Impact	Bench Marks-KPI						
	Total Food in Community lb						
1	Financial Investment \$						
2	Revenue Generated \$						
3	Net Revenue \$						
	Net Revenue Margins %						
	Employment- # of staff						
4	Employment- staffing hrs						
5	Employment- Volunteer/Time Banking Hrs						
6	Employment- staffing \$						
7	Employment- Time Banking Staffing \$						
8	Food Cost Saving \$						
9	Community Partners \$ Value						
10	Institutional Partners \$						
11	Global Partners \$						
Environmental Impact	Bench Marks-KPI						
1	Urban farm land/ sq footage						
2	Diversity of crops						
3	Organic and Food Waste Diverted						
4	Storm Water Diverted						
5	Energy savings						
6	GHG reduction						
7	Est Pesticide Use Reduction						
8	EChemical Use Fertilizer						

KEY OUTCOME INDICATORS

<u>Food System Component</u>		<u>1.Food Production</u>	<u>2.Food Distribution</u>	<u>3.Food Processing</u>	<u>4.Food Consumption</u>	<u>5.Food Recycling</u>	<u>6.Food & Climate Change</u>
Impact Area		Community Urban Agriculture	Cooperative Food Procurement	Community Kitchen	Communal Dining	Communal Composting	Community Food Resilience
Social Impact	Outcome Indicator						
Knowledge and Skill Development							
1	Change in Community Awareness						
2	Change in Community Motivation & Interest						
3	Change in Community Knowledge						
6	Change in Community Habits and Behaviour						
8	Change in Community Skills & Expertise						
Social Support Networks							
9	Change in Community Social Interactions						
10	Change in Community Social Bonding						
13	Change in Community Social Bridging/Cross Cultural Interactions						
14	Change in Community Sense of Belonging						

Human Rights							
2	Change in Sense of Power and Agency						
4	Change in Sense of Health and Well Being						
5	Change in Institutional Practices						
6	Change in Institutional Policies						
Food & Nutrition Security							
	Change in fruit and vegetable consumption						
7	Change in grain consumption						
8	Change in meat and fish consumption						
9	Change in sense of food security and nutrition						
10	Change in sense of food equity						



SECTION VII: TECHNICAL STUDY

WaterFarmers was contracted to complete a technical study for the OASIS Food Hub in St. James Town. This is a separate document that should be read in full for the complete analysis. Here is the re-produced executive summary from that report:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OASIS is a concept for a climate-resilient enterprise of integrated food distribution and production systems in the St. James Town area. The project consists of three phases, all centered around climate adaptation and food security; the first focusing on food storage and distribution, the second focusing on controlled environment agriculture production, and the third focused on waste diversion, outdoor growing, and community entrepreneurship. Each phase feeds into and supports the others through integrated loops within and across phases to support strategic program delivery.

Based on the space sizes and constraints available in the neighbourhood, aquaponics operations can produce up to 200,000 heads/year of leafy greens and 7.7 tonnes/year of fish biomass. Indoor mushroom farming can produce 15,900 lbs/year of speciality mushrooms. The rooftop farm can grow 9,400 lbs/year of tomatoes and 1,900 lbs/year of lettuce. Composting operations targeted towards 10% of the community could divert 485 tonnes of organic waste from landfill and produce 77 tonnes of premium worm compost and 290 tonnes of compost for sale. Rainwater collection has the capacity to divert 765 cubic metres of stormwater every year from municipal systems. The food hub presents the opportunity to offer tours and educational programming, as well as to rent out commercial kitchen space, small shop spaces, and event space.

All three phases have a combined startup cost of \$5.75 million, a combined operating cost of \$2.09 million, potential revenue of \$2.43 million, and an estimated net revenue of \$342,000. This results in an overall simple gross margin of 14.05% for the combined phases. Startup costs will require significant capital fundraising. Estimated budgets for each phase assume subsidized rent; facing the reality of market conditions and the need for guaranteed use of the space, subsidized rent with a long-term lease agreement is necessary.

Summary of costs, facilities and production estimates.

<i>Startup Cost</i>	\$1,229,172	\$1,676,755	\$2,839,450
<i>Operating Cost</i>	\$1,230,850	\$385,863	\$475,147
<i>Revenue</i>	\$1,350,057	\$532,269	\$551,500
<i>Net Revenue</i>	\$119,207	\$146,406	\$76,353
<i>Simple Gross Margin</i>	8.83%	27.51%	13.84%
<i>Simple Payback Period</i>	10	11	37
<i>Space (sqft)</i>	3,767	8,719	17,760
<i>Startup \$/sqft</i>	\$326	\$192	\$160
<i>Components</i>	Retail Grocery, Bulk Storage, Commercial Kitchen, and Office Space	Aquaculture, Aquaponics, Mushroom Farm, Backup Power	Composting, Rooftop Farm + Event Space, Rainwater Collection, Pop-up Market
<i>Production & Revenue Sources</i>	Sales of groceries, commercial kitchen rental, extension programming	188,000 heads/year of leafy greens, 7.6 tonnes/year fish biomass, 15,900 lbs/year of speciality mushrooms, extension programming	9,400 lbs/year of tomatoes and 1,900 lbs/year of lettuce, 77 tonnes of premium worm compost, 290 tonnes of compost, 765 cu. m of rainwater, rooftop farm event space, extension programming

Financial estimates do not incorporate the benefit of any social dividends provided to the community. As a social enterprise, the OASIS Food Hub also considers empowerment of the local community, environmental responsibility, and personal health among its values. Nonetheless, the operation must accept the need to be financially self-sustaining. This will require deploying these enterprises, such as indoor growing and composting, as a viable commercial operation. As with any social enterprise, the success of these initiatives will depend on strong relationships with project partners, and long-term dedication to the goals of each initiative.

Summary of the three phases of OASIS

PHASE 1 Community Food Hub



PHASE 2 Indoor Food Production



PHASE 3 Rooftop Production and Organics Composting



PHASE 1

- Distribution area / retail
- Bulk-storage of dry-goods and root vegetables
- Commercial kitchen
- Office / meeting space / workspace

PHASE 2

- Indoor growing in basement rooms:
 - Hydroponics
 - Aquaculture
 - Mushrooms in sub-basement

PHASE 3

- Rooftop production
- Rainwater collection / filtration
- Organics composting and soil distribution
- Pop-up shop space





SECTION VIII: BUSINESS CASE

The original design of the feasibility study included the development of a business plan; however, given that no firm location was identified for the OASIS Food Hub, a complete business plan was not possible within the timeframe of the grant. Consultant Tinashe Kanengoni was brought on contract to develop a business case for the OASIS Food Hub in line with the Technical Study conducted by WaterFarmers. The business case is a distinct document which should be read for the full analysis. Here are some key highlights:

Analysis of Revenue and Cost per Participant

Participants are beneficiaries of the project as well as people who participate or are involved in programs, events and site tours. It is the number of people who participate in OASIS Food Hub program activities and events per year. The number is based on program public engagement based on estimates in chart below.

Option Assessment Criteria					
Best Option Assessment Criteria	Cost per Participant	Kitchen & Office	Aquaponics & Mushroom	Rooftop Farm	All
5	Total Cost per Participant	\$2,058.33	\$1,708.33	\$2,758.33	\$2,175.00
6	Startup Cost per Participant	\$1,033.33	\$1,391.67	\$2,358.33	\$1,594.44
7	Operating Cost per Participant	\$1,025.00	\$316.67	\$400.00	\$580.56
8	Net Revenue per Participant	\$100.00	\$125.00	\$58.33	\$94.44

Employment Opportunities

The project can employ at least 34.5 people. Below is the break-down of full-time positions created from the project. There will be 15 temporary launching positions and 20 permanent staff.

Total Jobs/Staff	Launch	Kitchen and Office	Aquaponics and Mushrooms	Rooftop Farm	Compost	Program
	14.5	2.5	6	2.5	3	6
34.5	42%	7%	17%	7%	9%	17%

42% of the staff will be employed for short term to facilitate the development of the farm. 58% of proposed employment opportunities are permanent. Some of the extra employment opportunities are for social development and public education. The project will have the capacity to employ 6 social engagement and public education staff, 2 summer students and engage at least 240 volunteer works per year.

The OASIS Food Hub will be able to engage 240 volunteers through the St James Town Community Co-operative which has a core component of time banking as an alternative economy to recognize and value people's time outside of money. The co-operative's time bank seeks to unlock and leverage time and know-how to enable and facilitate inclusive participation of low income, under and unemployed community members. The timebank will increase access to opportunities that enhance employability, create spaces for meaningful social and economic interactions, and strengthen neighborhood social support networks. The time bank platform will enable easy tracking of volunteer and participant time and investment. It allows the food hub to engage community members without requiring additional resources or expense while still valuing their contributions through time as a form of invested capital.

Business Case Decision Making Ranking Matrix					
Criteria	Option Assessment Criteria	Kitchen & Office	Aquaponics & Mushrooms	Rooftop Farm	All
1	Total cost per sqft	1	3	4	2
2	Startup cost per sqft	1	2	4	3
3	Operating cost per sqft	1	3	4	2
4	Net revenue per sqft	4	3	1	2
5	Total cost per participant	3	4	1	2
6	Startup cost per participant	4	3	1	2
7	Operating cost per participant	3	4	1	2
8	Net revenue per participant	3	4	1	2
9	Employment Opportunities	1	3	2	4
10	Person share-Food Access	1	4	2	3
	Highest # Ranks Best	21	29	19	21
1- Least Favourable Outcome 4- Most Favourable Outcome					

On Composting

Source separated organics estimates 3,000 tonnes of feedstock per year requires about 25,000 sq. ft., though site requirements are highly variable depending on the composting technologies used and the feedstock collected. With 4,860 metric tonnes of input yearly, or 13.3 metric tonnes per day, this operation requires about 40,500 sq. ft.

The manageable target would be to capture and process 10% of the available organic waste in the high-rise neighborhood, or material added per day. This would be 1330kg/day (430 kg of food scraps plus 900 kg of “browns”). Space requirement for 10% of 13.3 tonnes would require at least about 4050 sq. ft. To do a comparative analysis we will compare the *Case Study: Hop Composting (Calgary)* in vessel model, which requires less manpower but more technology investment with people centered models that convert on average 18 kg of feedstock requires 2-3 hours of preparation (=/- 6kg/hr).

Hop processes 75,000 kg/month of input=2500/kg day. Pre-processing time was estimated at 380 hr./month which is about 197kg/hr. Post-processing time was estimated at 30 hrs./mo. The operation has Two full-time employees and 2 two employees are required for collections.

To operate at the same scale the OASIS Food Hub would need to collect at least 19 % of the waste, compared to the proposed 10 %. Increasing waste diversion targets to 19% would make the operation industrial scale. This would require at least about 8100 sq. ft, but this is a factor that varies depending on technology. OASIS should work with community members on processing: the average preparation time for processing 18 kg of feedstock is 2-3 hours, about -6kg/hr. To process 2500 kg a day it would require at 400 hours. If you had people composting for 5 hours/ day it would require at least 80 people a day. 2500kg costs at least \$500 tipping fees, it will produce 2000kg * \$7.3/10kg= \$1500.

The revenue potential is about \$2000 per 2500kg. Each person generates \$25 for 5 hrs. Meaning \$5/hr of labor may not give be sufficient incentives if the relationship is centered on monetary return. *The Hop Composting (Calgary)* system is managed by 2 full time employees, and another 2 employees are required for driving collection trucks.

For urban situations the in-vessel approach addresses many social and economic needs, but it does not create a lot of employment opportunities. A human centered approach requires more space and manpower. For the OASIS project it is important to create a fine balance between space, people engagement, employment and technology. A fair balance can create opportunities for socially inclusive engage of all in the economy of recycling

The largest challenge for the operators is the sorting of non-compostable waste from the feedstock. Hence why community education is central to a good composting system. Residents need information and opportunities to gain knowledge, skills, and tools to enhance their ability families and community groups to actively participate in waste management.

Social Development Analysis

From a social change perspective, the OASIS food hub project will strengthen community food security, social connections and economic inclusion by enhancing the capacity and abilities of marginalized and vulnerable people. Physical infrastructure, organizational infrastructure, ability to navigate systems, technical and adaptive capacity, social networks and confidence building are essential for the success of the venture. The physical infrastructure is a catalytic asset hence why it is important to have an integrative approach.

The project's lead, St. James Town Community Co-operative, has been building organizational infrastructure since September 2015, which was the year it was incorporated. The co-op operates with participatory governance structures and they also facilitate community education and social networking programs. One of the structures they are currently working on is a Time Banking Program to ensure that there is economic inclusion for the vulnerable and marginalized groups. The time bank currently has 127 members meaning that there is interest and value within the community.

The co-op's levels of social engagement are vast and varied meaning community has more opportunities to be involved or included. The co-op is currently working on a Bulk Food Buying Club. For this project the co-op works with food and farming co-operatives, distributors and local farmers to bulk purchase staple foods and local seasonal produce. All the food will need to be stored, processed and distributed hence why Phase 1-Kitchen and Office is foundational to the project. Phase 1 houses the social and institutional organizational development systems and structures.

To ensure the community has sufficient and necessary support, the Co-op reaches out and works with educators and experts from various fields on the development and implementation of the project. There is sufficient organizational capacity to take on the project. To create an environment that is supportive of learning and innovation, it is important to provide many pathways for participation and inclusive innovation. The Co-op is committed to human rights and considers education and training critical factors necessary for achieving more sustainable and resilient communities.

Through the OASIS food hub activities, the Co-op will assist members to make social connections and build new income streams and employable skills. The revenue generated from activities of the food hub will support both resident-members and the co-op to move towards a more self-driven food hub.

Replicability

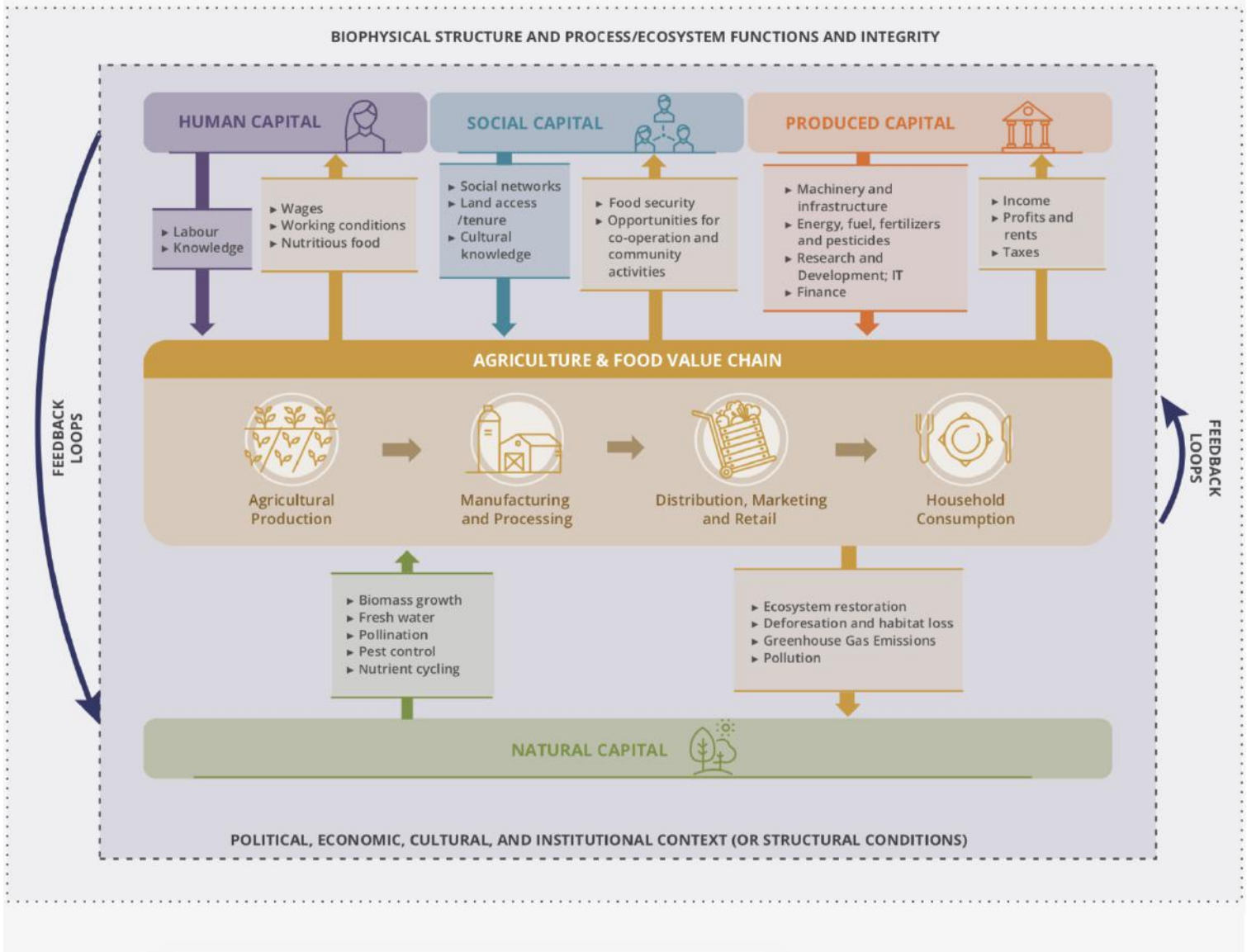
From the results of the technical study as well as the costs and revenue calculations from this business case analysis, there are possibilities for replicability in other neighbourhoods in the City of Toronto. Aside from the social needs of the city in areas such as health, social connections, new income streams, and employable skills, there are also technical standards and findings that address the minimum and maximums of the spaces needed for the various food hub components. Other communities could use those minimum and maximum standards to gauge spaces that are available or underused in their own communities to assess the feasibility of building a food hub in their neighbourhood. Annual and 10-year cost and revenue estimations are also based on research from across the City of Toronto and thus can form the basis of financial projections for other food hubs in Toronto.

Our development of a Key Performance Indicator Table is also a document that can be adapted and used for other food hubs in the city especially as we wait for the city to publish its own study on Urban Agriculture Indicators. Due to the nature of the issues that a food hub would address, such as food insecurity and on-site capacity, as well as our mapped out estimates of cost/revenue, employment opportunities, and technical spacing requirements, the results of the business case and the technical study lends itself to be easily replicated and adapted across the various neighbourhoods in Toronto.

Global institutions such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, World Health Organization, United Nations, and the City of Toronto have identified and are responding to the need for more comprehensive and accurate ways of measuring and assessing food systems, we will need to adapt planning and evaluation methods to synchronize with update systems of measurement.



Figure 2.5 Modified high-level 'systems' diagram of an archetypal eco-agri-food system (Source: adapted from authors of Chapter 1)



As seen in the TEEB map above, there is a need to expand our business analysis beyond the economic in order to recognize other types of capital including natural, produced, human, and social. In order to fully assess the business case for the OASIS food hub, we need to also adopt more holistic frameworks to see non-economic value and impact.

SECTION IX: KEY FINDINGS

This study asked: is a community-run, climate-resilient food hub generating healthy and affordable food feasible and desirable in St. James Town?

It is the opinion of the research team that the findings presented herein demonstrate that the OASIS Food Hub in St. James Town feasible, desirable, and replicable.

Key findings were synthesized from this report, and the full technical study and business case.

Community Need

Yes,

- There is a strong need in the neighbourhood for access to affordable healthy food
- OASIS can provide for many of the specific foods that residents want at a better quality + price + locality
- There is sufficient organizational and community capacity
- OASIS addresses social, environmental, and economic needs
- OASIS meets municipal, provincial, and federal policy-set needs

Community-Identified Values and Priorities



Community Buy-In

Yes:

Residents are willing to join a food co-op and want locally produced food

Resident and non-resident co-op members are starting a bulk food buying club

Interested and engaged residents found with skills and education needed for OASIS

Key Challenge:

After 6 years of talk, the community needs to see a space and/or funding commitment to believe that OASIS can be real, and therefore more of their time and energy into it

Stakeholders and Political Support

Yes,

- There is a strong support network for OASIS in St. James Town, including the following partners or strong supporters:

- Cabbagetown Youth Centre
- Community Matters
- Trinity Life Church
- Church of St. Peter's and St. Simon's
- Emerging Resident Associations (support indicated)
- Wellesley Community Center (support indicated)

- City Councilor Kristyn Wong-Tam is a political champion of OASIS

- MPP Suze Morrison is in support

Key Challenge:

- In the neighbourhood:
 - Service Providers Network unresponsive, no support or collaboration indicated
 - TCHC re-structuring: unable to sustain dialogue about space in year of study
 - Schools need re-engaging: busy with fire recovery family-care in year of study
- Municipal, and provincial/federal *collaboration* with public/private landowners is key
 - Collaboration required across municipal offices used to working in silos
 - MP is also Finance Minister and has limited ability to support own riding
 - Key funding opportunities were eliminated by provincial government

Space

Yes,

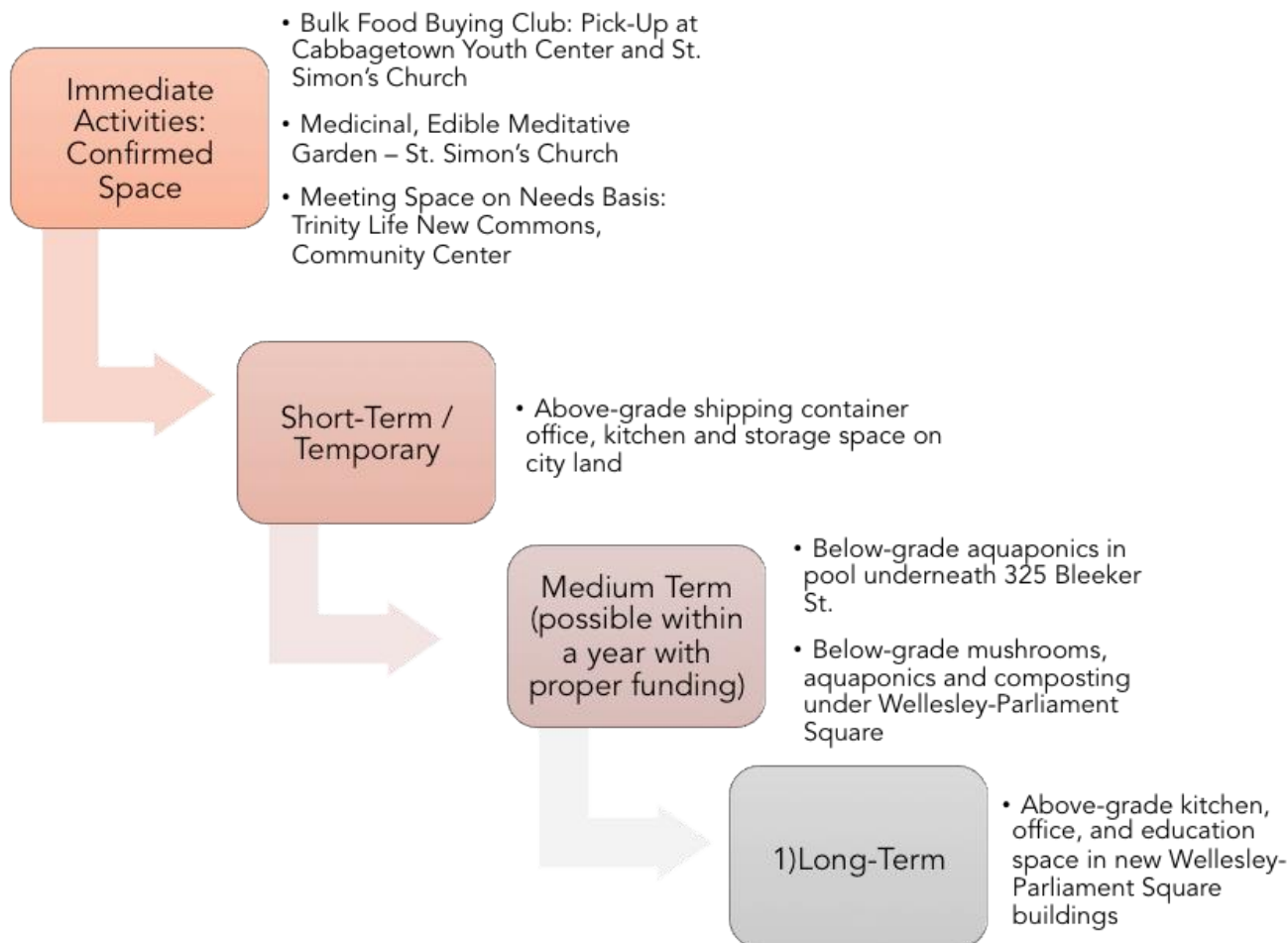
- There are multiple spaces where OASIS components could be placed
- We can produce significant amount of food and divert significant green waste with the spaces available

Challenges:

- Wellesley-Parliament Square is interested, but haven't dialogued since a fire in their building
- Public spaces are available but neglected; need retrofitting and restoring before they are usable; tied up in slow political processes

Component	Minimum Size (sq. m)								
		Rooftops	Basement Rooms	Parking Garage	Gyms	Unused Indoor Pool Space	Above Ground - Pool Space	Above Ground - Grade	Shipping Container
Retail Food / Grocery Distribution	200		X				X	X	X
Reserve Food Storage	50		X						X
Office & Meeting Space	25						X	X	X
Workshop Space	25		X	X	X		X	X	X
Commercial Kitchen	50		X				X	X	X
CEA Hydroponics/Aquaponics	300		X		X	X			
Backup Power Source	10	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Mushroom Facility	200		X	X	X				X
Recirculating Aquaculture System	300		X	X	X	X	X		
Composting	400		X	X	X				
Green Roof Event/Programming Space	100	X						X	
Green Roof Farm	1,000	X						X	
Pop-up Shop Installation Space	100						X	X	X
Rainwater Collection*	50	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
TOTAL	2,810								
*not including rooftop collection area									

Space Findings 1: Minimum size by component



Space Findings 2: Best possible spaces for OASIS by phase

Technical and Financial Feasibility

Key Insights from Local Field Work, Analysis, and Comparable Case Studies show that Yes,

- The co-op model is the sweet spot between for-profit and charitable ventures
- Measures are proven, off-the-shelf, easily deployed, and scalable
- OASIS will *significantly increase climate resilience* & emergency preparedness that *can be replicated* in other communities
 - Modules are adjustable to site availability, funding & community priorities
- Redeploying unused/underused space increases asset and community value
- OASIS can employ at least 35 people
 - 15 temporary staff for launch, and 20 permanent staff
- OASIS Facilities will last over 10 years and can serve at least 1,200 people per year
 - Over the 10-year period the total cost of investment per participant ranges between \$170.83 and \$275.83 / yr
 - Operating costs range between \$31.67 and \$102.50; and,
 - Start-up costs range between \$103.33 and \$235.83 / yr

Key Challenge:

- *Zoning/permitting challenges* for urban agriculture and composting
- *Biological success is more straightforward* than economic success for indoor farming, particularly if cost-recovery for start-up capital is required

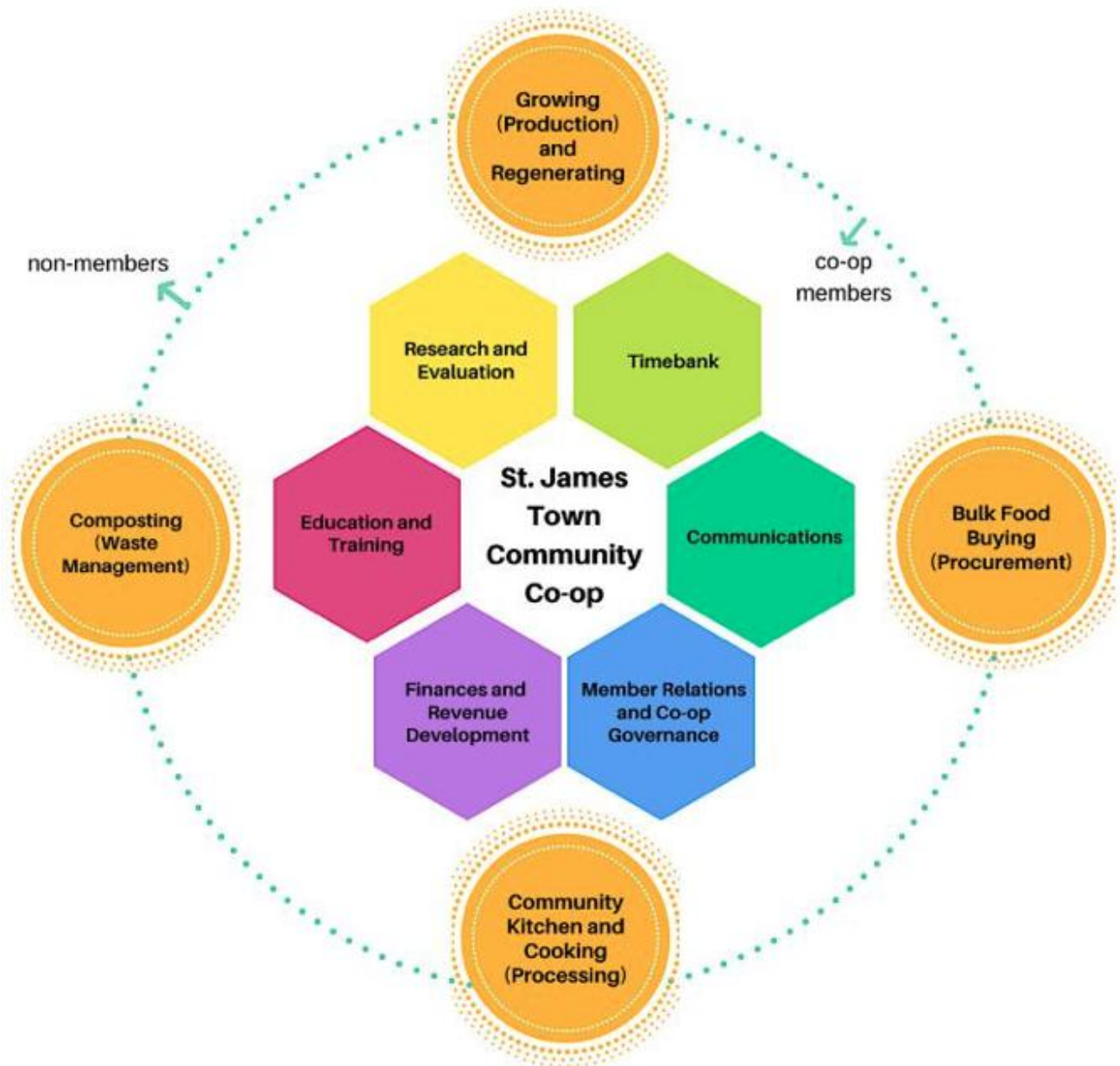
Factors for Success

- *Non-recoverable grants for start-up costs* will assist in achieving economically sustainable indoor farming of high nutrient products
 - Grants for start-up costs will significantly reduce cost-recovery period
- High-End customers and products: profits from indoor farming often depend on this
- Kitchen is needed to process prepared meals and foods
- *Education and event space for trainings, tours, and rentals* to supplement revenues
- Below market real-estate/subsidized rents with long-term leases is critical
- *Onsite capacity building* and ownership is essential
 - Excellence in operations and retention of skilled individuals
 - Large capital expenses for composting equipment must be paired with *proportional capacity* to collect, process and utilize the product
- Best option is to start with Phase 1: Kitchen and Office, and phase 2: Aquaponic & Mushrooms as an integrated investment
 - Phase 1 is highest start-up cost but most social capital for long-term sustainability
 - Phase 2 is most profitable, but cannot exist in isolation



OASIS Model

This model summarizes the key activities of the OASIS Food Hub as supported and managed through the St. James Town Community Co-operative. It was developed by core team members with feedback provided by St. James Town Community Co-operative members.



SECTION X: RECOMMENDATIONS TO OPERATIONALIZE THE OASIS FOOD HUB

Community Buy-In and Needs Assessment:

The community is ready for OASIS, but needs to see significant stable investment:

#1 Increase Community Capacity by Training 15 Residents to Launch and Run OASIS Food Hub

#2 Community Kitchen and Processing Space needs to be located and confirmed

#3 Bulk Food Buying Club needs to make its first purchase as a proof of concept

Stakeholder Engagement and Political Support:

#1 OASIS requires collaboration across government offices to be able to operationalize adaptive innovation. This is the biggest challenge to OASIS success.

#2 A Working Group of relevant government/department offices should be created to facilitate operationalization

#3 A strong network of food organizations and producers is in development for OASIS. More action-planning needed between farmers and the St. James Town Co-op.

Space:

#1 Temporary Shipping Container Kitchen, Office, and Storage Space is needed while permanent space is retrofitted and/or built

#2 Formal Agreement between Toronto Community Housing and the OASIS Food Hub is needed to move forward on specific site analysis and operationalization

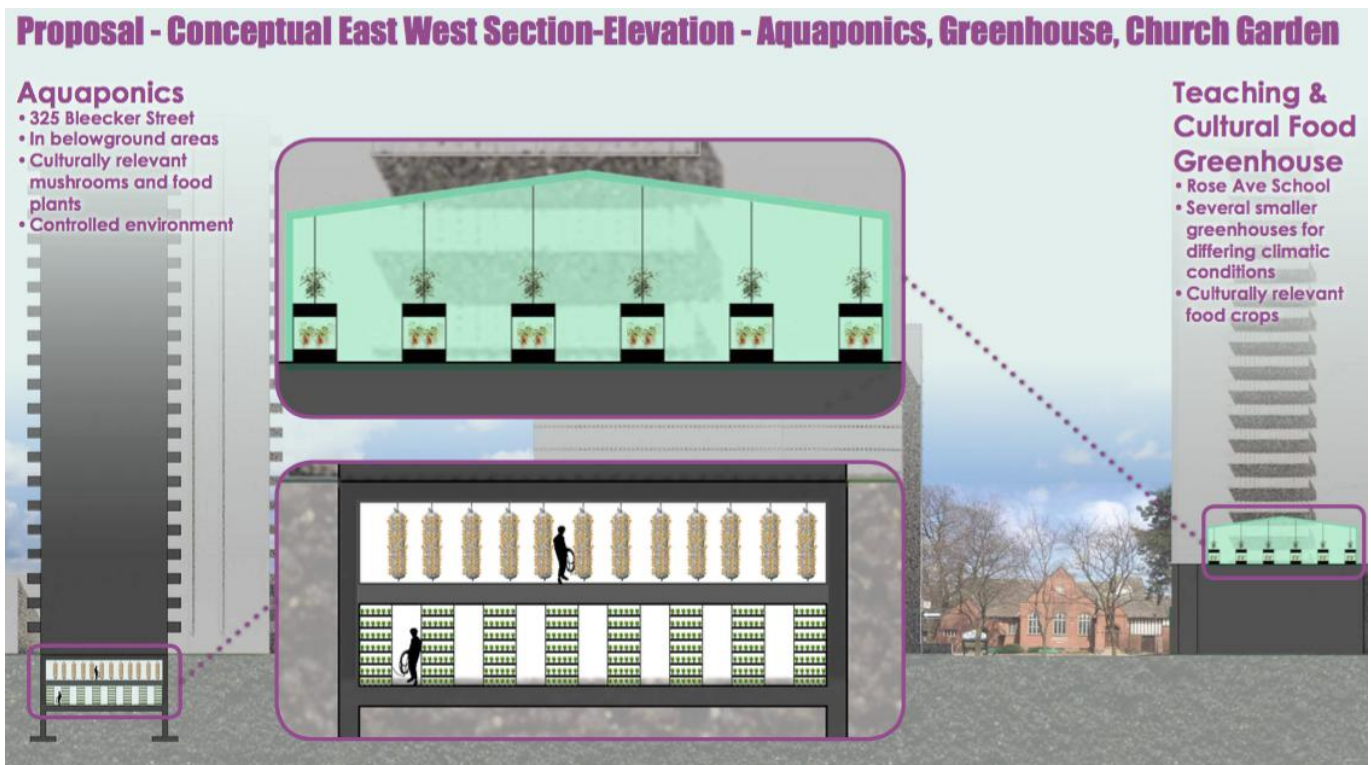
#3 City Planning and other government offices should empower more dialogue and formal agreement between Wellesley-Parliament Square and the OASIS Food Hub for space in new developments (once approved by the city, through section 37), as well as composting and mushroom farming in unused space under existing developments.

Technical Feasibility Study and Business Case:

#1 Phase 1 (kitchen, office, and storage space), and Phase 2 (aquaponics and mushrooms farming) should be implemented together as an integrated investment for the greatest long-term sustainability and cost efficiency.

#2 Non-recoverable grants need to be identified or created for start-up capital and staff costs

#3 Detailed site and specs analysis is needed once site(s) is confirmed. Zoning and permitting may be a major challenge and should be identified and addressed as soon as possible



Visualization of Below-Grade Growing, Gigi Presentey, 2019

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APPENDIX 1

TCHC Underground Space Assessment for Food Hub Briefing Note / January 23rd 2016

Issue: The St. James Town Community Co-op requests access from and collaboration with TCHC to assess the suitability and scope of the sub-basement, former swimming pool under 325 Bleeker, and adjacent areas as appropriate; from 200 Wellesley through to 375 Bleeker St. as potential sites to house components of a Community Food Hub pilot project.

Background: The St. James Town Community Co-operative (www.stjamestowncoop.org) is working to develop a climate resilient healthy food hub managed by residents through the co-op. The Food Hub comprises of a co-operative and timebank, a waste diversion and composting program, a bulk food buying club, grow tech R&D, shipping containers to house certified kitchen and related food hub functions, social enterprise incubation, and education and training.

In the first phase, the Co-op is seeking to develop the bulk food-buying club and waste diversion program and has identified the sub-basement/adjacent underground space as ideal possible sites. The OASIS technical team is also interested in assessing the potential of the sub-basement to house food growing technology such as aquaponics systems. We are requesting collaboration with TCHC to assess the conditions and viability of the underground space.

Specific Request: To scope grow tech, composting and food storage potential, we are requesting site plans and an on-site walk through with TCHC engineers to assess:

- Underground structural suitability
- Mechanical-electrical HVAC systems
- Status of water system and supply
- Air quality
- Accessibility and potential security issues

We are working with a team of engineers and grow tech specialists and would like to bring up to 6 of our team to this on-site assessment with TCHC staff.

The underground space that we want to assess includes:

- A. 200 Wellesley St. E.
- B. 275 Bleeker St.
- C. 325 Bleeker St.
- D. 375 Bleeker St.

And adjacent areas as deemed potentially appropriate.

The OASIS team respectfully requests that this assessment take place before the end of February 2107, in accordance with timelines related to securing funding for the project.

APPENDIX 2: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

GLEN MURRAY, MPP Toronto Centre

Wednesday, November, 25, 2015

Neil Carter
Advisor, Stakeholder Relations
Toronto Community Housing
7th Floor 931 Yonge St.
Toronto, ON
M4W 2H2

Dear Mr. Neil Carter,

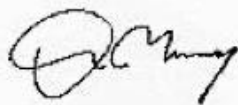
It is with pleasure that I write to you today in support of the Organic Aquaponics Sustainable Integrated Systems (OASIS) Project in St. Jamestown. Food Security in the St. Jamestown neighbourhood is a major concern and I believe the OASIS Project would help significantly in creating a sustainable, accessible food source for residents of the community.

As climate change continues, our weather and climate will become increasingly destabilized. Pursuing alternative methods of growing our food has become critically important. The OASIS Project would create a predictable food source for the community as the green house and aquaponics farm would allow for a full year growing season. Furthermore, by utilizing closed-system agriculture, the OASIS would limit greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

St. Jamestown is one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods in North America. Located in the downtown region, food access is a major issue for the residents of the community. Along with this limited access comes limited food education. The OASIS project could serve as an educational resource for the residents by teaching youth about food production and healthy dietary choices.

I believe the OASIS green house and aquaponics farm would be a beneficial and important addition to the neighbourhood of St. Jamestown. Serving as a local food source and educational hub to the residents of the community, the OASIS could become a model of future sustainable agriculture. I am pleased to support this project and sincerely hope you consider the proposal for the OASIS in St. Jamestown.

Sincerely,



Glen Murray, MPP
Toronto Centre

Community Action Centre 120 Carlton Street, Unit 318, Toronto, ON M5A 4K2
Tel 416-972-7683 | Fax 416-972-7686 | Email g.murray.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org
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Michael Skaljin
Community Development Officer
Tower & Neighbourhood Revitalization
Social Development, Finance & Administration

City Manager's Office
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Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

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Community Funding Unit
Social Development, Finance & Administration Division
City of Toronto
100 Queen Street West
15th Floor East Tower
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

July 31, 2017

Re: Letter of Support – St. James Town Community Co-operative Inc.

This is a letter of support for the funding proposal submitted by the St. James Town Community Cooperative Inc. This project aligns with Tower & Neighbourhood Revitalization Unit's mandate to improve the sustainability of Toronto's apartment neighbourhoods: a cleaner and greener city, stronger communities, increased social and cultural benefits, and enhance local economic activity.

The Tower Renewal Program has been aware of the project since 2014 and considers it an interesting potential model that could address several aspects of the Tower Renewal's mandate. Tower Renewal agrees that producing a feasibility and design report, business plan and developmental evaluation model for the pilot project could provide useful information and climate adaptation ideas that could benefit St James Town, as well as other low income high rise communities.

The City of Toronto believes the St. James Town Community Cooperative and the staff have the capacity to deliver this project and see them as a partner of the City of Toronto that consistently delivers on City-funded initiatives. With our ability to liaise between City departments and staff we feel that we can add value to this potential project as well as support the development of sustainable partnerships to enhance the work. If you have any further questions then please don't hesitate to contact me.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 416-993-9590.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Skaljin".

Michael Skaljin
Community Development Officer

ST. JAMES TOWN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

July 31, 17

To whom it may concern,

The St. James Town Residents Association has been collaborating with LIFT and the St James Town Community Co-operative's OASIS project for 3 years; assisting with outreach, arranging meetings, and providing input and advice. We are pleased to offer a letter of support to the OASIS Food hub Planning and Design project as we believe such a project is much needed in our community where hunger is common and access to healthy food is rare and too expensive for the majority of residents.

The residents association will continue to support the development of the OASIS project. Currently we are engaging with the co-op and its partners to help develop an emergency plan for residents in case of extreme weather and other events that could cause power outages and/or hinder access to water, food and other basic needs.

St James Town has long needed community based programs that can help address urgent needs like access to affordable healthy food, sustainable community development, climate resilience strategies, good job training, organic waste diversion, and employment opportunities. We hope the selection committee will agree that this pilot project could be of much benefit to our community and other high rise and or low income neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the St James Town Residents Association

Milan Slavkovich Director of Safety and Security
Yours Truly M. Slavkovich







