

Halifax Regional Food Hub | Executive Summary

28 February 2023 Draft

Overview

The Halifax Regional Food Hub will connect primary and secondary food producers located throughout mainland Nova Scotia with HRM-based wholesale buyers in the commercial, community, and institutional sectors. Services include:

- Online ordering and payment processing
- Aggregation
- Storage – dry, cold, and frozen
- Order fulfilment and delivery

The Halifax Food Hub does not plan to do retail sales, co-packing (packing for retail sale), or secondary processing, as these services are already being provided by established enterprises. However, it may expand into one or more of these areas, should demand warrant.

Proponents

The Halifax Food Hub has been researched and developed by the following working group:

- Justin Cantafo (working group lead) - representing Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia,
- Mandy Chapman - representing the Mobile Food Market,
- Sue Kelleher - representing Feed Nova Scotia,
- Ghita Rammaz - representing the Novalea Kitchen and Market,
- Lisa Roberts - representing Nourish Nova Scotia, and
- Leticia Smillie - representing the Halifax Food Policy Alliance and Halifax Regional Municipality

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Beneficiaries

HRM-based Wholesale Customers

The Halifax Food Hub will seek to secure a minimum of 20 wholesale buyers, including:

Community Organisations in Halifax, Dartmouth, and Adjacent Communities:

- Community food organisations, e.g.: Feed NS, Mobile Food Market, Meals on Wheels, The Loaded Ladle
- Other nonprofits who buy food (childcare, family resource centres)
- Other food hubs located throughout Nova Scotia

Institutions in Halifax, Dartmouth, and Adjacent Communities:

- Halifax Regional Centre for Education
- Halifax Public Libraries
- NSCC's HRM campuses
- Northwood and other LTC facilities

Independently-owned Food Businesses Located in Halifax, Dartmouth, and Adjacent Communities:

- Restaurants
- Value-added Processors
- Independent Grocers

Mainland Nova Scotia Producers

The Halifax Food Hub will seek to secure a minimum of 50 producers, including:

- Fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, dairy, eggs, and secondary products (baked goods, beverages, etc.); small to medium sized, looking to scale up; current farmers' market vendors would be a key sector.
- Located in mainland Nova Scotia

Value Propositions

For Wholesale Buyers

Convenient access to cost-effective, local supply of high-quality Nova Scotian food:

- Online ordering of local product, with delivery to their door
- Risk mitigation – food access during emergencies
- Corporate social responsibility – making a strong contribution to the provincial economy

For Producers

Expanded, efficient access to wholesale customers in HRM; Reduced waste (of time, produce, and other resources); Increased sales and profits:

- Aggregation, storage, brokerage, and distribution services – allow producers to simplify and focus on production
- Online ordering/payment processing
- Enhanced marketing and awareness
- Access to processing and co-packing services (with the Station, Flowercart Group, et al.)
- Assistance with meeting health and safety regulations

Key Revenue Streams

- Product sales – food that is purchased from primary and secondary producers and re-sold to wholesale buyers
- Fees charged to producers for storage rental, brokerage, and membership

Timeline

It is our hope to make the Halifax Food Hub operational – delivering locally produced food to wholesale buyers in HRM – by September of 2023. This is feasible only if the Food Hub is housed at an appropriate organisation.

Legal & Governance

The Halifax Regional Food Hub will be structured as a co-operative, with members drawn from three primary groups: participating producers, participating buyers, and allied nonprofit organisations with an interest in food security and food sovereignty. The board of directors will be drawn from the membership.

Operational Requirements

Human Resource Requirements

All operational functions will be undertaken by a paid staff, starting with 1 FTE (full-time equivalent) for general/sales management, and then adding 3 FTEs (drivers, warehouse technicians, and ordering/administration)

Location

The Halifax Food Hub will be located at one of the HRM's industrial parks (e.g. Burnside, Bayer's Lake, etc.), providing easy access for Nova Scotia producers and quick delivery times into wholesale buyers in Dartmouth, Halifax and adjacent communities. The ideal location would be on a transit route, to make it accessible for employees and volunteers to get to work.

Facility Requirements

- Warehouse facility with: at least one loading bay; at least one forklift and pallet jack; dry, cold, and frozen storage; stainless steel tables and large packing area, food safe sinks; waste management systems and box crusher; parking for delivery vehicles and staff vehicles
- A minimum of two refrigerated delivery vehicles,
- Administrative office or workspace, staff room, handwashing sinks,
- Online ordering and payment processing platform such as <https://home.localfoodmarketplace.com/>