

VanRIMS No.: 08-3000-11

MEMORANDUM

September 17, 2026

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Donny van Dyk, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
Jason Twa, City Clerk
Andrew Aguilar, Director, Legislative Operations
Kevin Burris, Manager, Civic Agencies
Councillor Pete Fry, Council Liaison
Councillor Sean Orr, Council Liaison
Commissioner Scott Jensen
Trustee Preeti Faridkot
Trustee Christopher Richardson
Jason Hsieh, Staff Liaison
Krista Voth, Park Board Staff Liaison
Vanessa Lam, Vancouver Coastal Health Liaison

FROM: Vancouver Food Policy Council

SUBJECT: Vancouver Food Policy Council Report of Activities, 2026

PURPOSE

To provide Vancouver City Council with a summary of the activities of the Vancouver Food Policy Council for the period of January 1 to November 1, 2026.

BACKGROUND

The Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC) is a civic advisory body established by Vancouver City Council to provide advice and recommendations on food systems in Vancouver: related policy, programs, and initiatives. The VFPC supports the City's commitment to advancing equity, sustainability, public health, and reconciliation through a coordinated, systems-based approach to food policy. The VFPC serves as a forum for collaboration among community members, subject-matter experts, Indigenous partners, City staff, and other civic agencies.

The mandate of the Vancouver Food Policy Council is as follows:

- Supports the development of just and sustainable food systems in alignment with the Vancouver Food Charter
- Advises Council and staff on policies and plans affecting the food system, including the Vancouver Food Strategy and others, as they are developed, implemented, and updated
- Works collaboratively with counterparts from other civic agencies to identify opportunities for joint action on issues of mutual interest

- Works co-operatively with external agencies and groups whose activities affect constituent communities
- Engages in outreach to disseminate information and encourage participation from constituent communities

DISCUSSION

1. Significant Activities

1.1 Overview of Activities

During the 2026 reporting period, the Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC) focused on food access, food infrastructure, food recovery, and food-system resilience. Activities included presentations from City staff and community organizations, policy engagement, liaison updates, and planning for an urban agriculture panel at the final meeting of the term.

1.2 Policy and Government Engagement

Equitable Access to Healthy Food Retail Initiative. On January 29, 2026, the Staff Liaison, Henry Lau, presented an update on the Equitable Access to Healthy Food Retail Initiative and responded to questions.

Advancing the Right to Food and Public Food Infrastructure. On March 11, 2026, Acting Co-Chair Jordan Bultitude spoke on behalf of the VFPC in support of Councillor Sean Orr's motion, Advancing the Right to Food and Public Food Infrastructure. The motion proposed affirming the right to food and examining municipal tools to support public and community food retail infrastructure. The motion was not adopted.

Field House Activation Program. On April 2, 2026, Park Board Staff Liaison Krista Voth and consultant Ingrid Figueroa presented an overview of the City of Vancouver Field House Activation Program and responded to questions.

Our City Hall Food Security Policy Platform. On August 8, 2026, the VFPC endorsed the non-partisan food security policy platform in Women Transforming Cities' Our City Hall campaign for the 2026 municipal election. The platform calls on candidates for Mayor and City Council to support municipal action to improve access to affordable, culturally relevant, nutritious food.

Annual Reporting and Governance. On January 29, 2026, the VFPC approved its 2024–2025 annual report and appointed Jordan Bultitude and Ryan Natividad as Acting Co-Chairs. Kae Yee Tsai took a leave of absence and stepped away from the Co-Chair role, while Michelle Reining remained a Co-Chair for the duration of the term.

Increased Sustainable Food Systems Funding: In its February 10, 2026 report, City staff recommended a \$40,000 funding increase for the Sustainable Food Systems stream, aligned with Council's July 2024 *Closing the Gap: Investing in the City of Vancouver's Food System* motion, which was developed with support from the Vancouver Food Policy Council. On March 10, Council approved 13 Sustainable Food Systems Grants totalling \$223,700.

1.3 Hosted Events and Public-Facing Engagement

Farming in the City: The State of Urban Agriculture in Vancouver. The VFPC is developing a public panel for its final meeting on September 24, 2026. Current and recent farm operators are expected to discuss the opportunities, constraints, and policy conditions affecting urban agriculture in Vancouver.

The panel is intended to inform future policy advice through operators' direct experience, including the role of urban farms in food access, education, community connection, and resilience. The event had not taken place when this report was prepared.

1.4 Guest Speakers and Knowledge Exchange

The VFPC's completed presentations and scheduled discussions addressed community programs, food recovery, and emergency planning.

Vancouver Food Recovery Network. On May 28, 2026, Shad Mayne of CityReach Care Society; Michelle Reining and Mahjobeh Badakhsh of Vancouver Food Runners; and Aiyana Kane of Food Stash Foundation presented on the Vancouver Food Recovery Network (VFRN). The presentation provided the VFPC with an overview of Vancouver's existing food recovery system and its role in advancing food security, waste reduction, climate action, and community resilience. The four VFRN organizations have worked collaboratively since 2019, using complementary models to recover surplus food and redistribute it through nonprofit and community food programs. Their collaboration includes coordinating food donor referrals, logistics, storage, volunteer resources, knowledge-sharing, policy engagement, and funding opportunities.

The presentation also shared findings from the City-funded 2024–2026 Social Innovation Project, which examined opportunities to strengthen and coordinate food recovery as civic infrastructure. In 2024–2025, VFRN partners collectively rescued 9.7 million pounds of food, worked with 254 food businesses, supported 246 nonprofit food programs, and redistributed approximately \$35 million in food value. The discussion provided an opportunity for VFPC members and the public to consider how food recovery could be better integrated into future municipal food-system planning, infrastructure, climate, and waste-reduction initiatives.

Other Speakers

- Clara Prager, Manager, Civic Engagement and Advocacy, **Women Transforming Cities**, presented an overview of the organization and the development of the Our City Hall Policy Platform on January 29, 2026.
- Laura Smit, Executive Director, **Vancouver Farmers Market**, presented an overview of its operations, impact, challenges, and connections with the VFPC on April 2, 2026.

Food Security in Emergency Management. On July 23, 2026, the VFPC hosted a panel of subject-matter experts from the food security and emergency management fields for an exploratory discussion on food security and resilience in the context of community emergency management planning. The discussion included an overview of current provincial emergency management standards and local practices; gaps in the consideration of food security within emergency planning; hazards and climate-related emergency scenarios that can affect local food security; and emerging approaches to strengthening community resilience. The panel also

highlighted work led by the Comox Food Policy Advisory Council with the Village of Cumberland to build food security considerations into community emergency management practices and policy. Participants shared ideas for practical community- and policy-based actions that could help strengthen food security and resilience as an integrated component of emergency planning in Vancouver.

Speakers included:

- Maurita Prato, LUSH Valley Food Action Society / Co-Chair, Comox Food Policy Advisory Council
- Dr. Naomi Robert, Institute for Sustainable Food Systems, KPU / Food Systems Lab, SFU / Co-Chair, Comox Food Policy Advisory Council
- Dr. Tammara Soma, SFU Resource and Environmental Management: Food Systems
- Kristi Tatebe, KPU Institute for Sustainable Food Systems
- Katia Tynan, City of Vancouver
- Representative from the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

The session provided an opportunity for VFPC members and the public to increase their awareness of an emerging area of public concern, exchange ideas, and learn about approaches and practical recommendations that could help strengthen Vancouver's food security and resilience in the face of future emergencies.

Overall, the presentations provided opportunities for VFPC members and the public to hear from community organizations and public agencies and ask questions about current food programs and initiatives.

1.5 Collaboration, Working Groups, and Liaisons

The VFPC received Council and staff liaison updates at its January meeting and staff liaison updates at its April meeting. These updates provided opportunities to discuss current civic initiatives and share information.

Throughout the 2023–2026 term, the VFPC undertook policy engagement, community outreach, event planning, and knowledge exchange in alignment with its work-plan areas of focus: food access and equity, food infrastructure, healthy school food, and urban agriculture and climate resilience. Progress varied across these areas, reflecting member capacity and emerging priorities.

2. Future Directions

The VFPC's remaining planned activity is the September 24, 2026 urban agriculture panel. The VFPC intends to document the discussion to inform future advice to City Council and staff.

As the 2023–2026 work-plan period concludes, suggested priorities for the next advisory term include equitable food access, community food infrastructure, food security in emergency planning, healthy school food, urban agriculture, and municipal food-system investment (funding).

Limited City staff capacity also presents a challenge. Food systems staffing has decreased from four social planners to one. Due to capacity constraints, the current food systems planner is

unable to serve as the VFPC's staff liaison or attend VFPC meetings. Addressing this gap would support ongoing communication with City staff and continuity in the VFPC's advisory work.

Documenting active issues, partner relationships, and outstanding work would support continuity between terms. Clear orientation to City processes, consistent staff and Council liaison participation, and work planning that reflects available capacity would also help incoming members carry this work forward.

3. Self-Assessment

The VFPC considers its 2026 activities consistent with its food-policy mandate and work-plan priorities. Presentations and discussions addressed food retail access, farmers markets, field-house activation, food recovery, and emergency planning. The planned September panel will focus on urban agriculture and resilience.

The VFPC benefits from members' professional and lived experience and contributions from staff, liaisons, and community partners.

The 2024–2025 annual report identified limited member capacity as a barrier to advancing urban agriculture and climate resilience work. The planned September panel provides an opportunity to address this work-plan area through farm operators' direct experience. Its outcomes will need to be assessed after the event.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing is presented to Vancouver City Council for information.