

From: ["Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)
To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 3/30/2022 4:22:31 PM
Subject: [Upcoming news release: Circular Food Innovation Lab launches \(March 31, 2022\)](#)

Dear Mayor and Council,

The City is partnering with the Vancouver Economic Commission and Emily Carr University of Art and Design to launch the Circular Food Innovation Lab next month. This is an exciting new initiative to support local businesses in their efforts to reduce avoidable food waste across Vancouver.

We will be issuing the below news release below tomorrow and supporting our partners in promoting the initiative to local businesses via our channels. Please keep the news release embargoed until it is issued from the City's account.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver
paul.mochrie@vancouver.ca



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x̱m̱əθḵw̱əy̱əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

City of Vancouver
News Release
March 31, 2022

Circular Food Innovation Lab launches to help businesses cut food waste and costs

As food prices rise, many Vancouverites are feeling the effect on their budgets. Impacts on our local food industries from extreme weather events and supply chain interruptions are highlighting the importance of eliminating avoidable food waste across Vancouver. In partnership with the Vancouver Economic Commission and Emily Carr University of Art and Design, the City has created the Circular Food Innovation Lab to test solutions to this problem.

Vancouver's food distributors, processors, restaurants, grocers and other food businesses are invited to participate in the Circular Food Innovation Lab, which begins April 27, 2022 and is expected to wrap up by January 2023.

"The Circular Food Innovation Lab is one of the ways we as a City are supporting Vancouver businesses, during such an important recovery period, by giving them the tools to reduce their food waste and costs," says Mayor Kennedy Stewart. "Thank you to our partners with the Vancouver Economic Commission, Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance and Mitacs for helping to make this important work a reality."

The Circular Food Innovation Lab can help participating businesses to:

- Explore ways to risk-proof their business and adjust to rapid change and uncertainty;
- Increase profits by reducing costs related to food waste;
- Learn from fellow food businesses tackling similar challenges;
- Access free expertise, tools, and services to reduce food waste;
- Inform future policies to prevent and reduce wasted food in Vancouver's food supply chain;
- Develop innovative food waste solutions that show leadership in their industry; and
- Contribute to the formation of an industry-led taskforce to solve wasted food in Vancouver.

"Vancouverites are paying more attention to the issue of food loss and waste and so are we," says Bryan Wong, BC Produce Marketing Association President. "BCPMA is calling for more decisive action and looks to education and planning to equip our members with new ideas. The Circular Food Innovation lab is an opportunity to collaborate with companies throughout the food chain towards circular solutions so food grown for people doesn't go to waste."

"The Circular Food Innovation Lab is an opportunity to join forces with like-minded businesses as they develop new strategies that eliminate wasted food on-site as well as upstream, and downstream of distribution," says Meg O'Shea, Senior Manager of Economic Transformation at the Vancouver Economic Commission. "This lab will begin a rich dialogue embedded in learning and acting beyond the topic of reducing food waste to explore the opportunities presented by operating in a just circular food economy."

Food waste is a widespread issue: in 2019, the Canadian food industry lost an estimated \$39 billion in revenue due to 8.79 million tonnes of avoidable, unplanned food waste. In Vancouver alone, businesses discarded 25,000 tonnes of edible food that year, an amount equal to 37,000 meals lost.

Investing into initiatives to reduce food waste yields ready dividends: a [2017 study](#) by the World Resources found that for every dollar invested in preventing or reducing wasted food, businesses could save \$14.

"Wasted food is the low-hanging fruit of the emissions reduction world. And with food prices soaring, the public and political will is there to make our food systems more efficient and more sustainable," says Michael Shank, co-director of the Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance. "Now is the time to lead. Vancouver's innovation in this circular space is critical and we at the Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance look forward to leveraging their lab's lessons-learned for the benefit of our entire city network."

For more information on the Circular Food Innovation Lab, or to apply to participate, visit vancouver.ca/food-innovation-lab [\[link not yet live\]](#)

Media contact:

Civic Engagement and Communications

media@vancouver.ca