

From: "Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>
To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
Date: 5/11/2023 12:17:56 PM
Subject: Circular Food Innovation Lab Update
Attachments: ENG - Memo - Circular Food Innovation Lab Update.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Taryn Scollard. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- The Circular Food Innovation Lab (CFIL) project, which aimed to reduce food waste in Vancouver, has concluded and learnings are now being shared with stakeholders.
- City staff applied for and were successful in obtaining external funding for this project from the Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance and Mitacs.
- CFIL brought together 18 businesses from Vancouver's food supply chain for a 10-month project (April 2022 to February 2023) to co-create potential solutions to prevent and reduce the risk of edible food being wasted.
- The project resulted in potential solutions for testing in a range of commercial environments and, strong trusting relationships between businesses and the City and all partners.
- City staff have led the co-writing of a final report and a solutions toolkit, which will be available to the public and distributed to members of Vancouver's food supply chain.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Taryn Scollard at 604-873-7789 or taryn.scollard@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x̱m̱əθḵʷəy̱əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

May 11, 2023

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Acting Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Director of Operations, Mayor's Office

FROM: Taryn Scollard
Deputy General Manager, Safety and Operations, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Circular Food Innovation Lab Update

RTS #: N/A

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the Circular Food Innovation Lab, a project aimed at reducing food waste in Vancouver.

The Circular Food Innovation Lab (CFIL) aimed to co-create change within Vancouver's food businesses and their supply chain. CFIL brought together 18 businesses from Vancouver's food supply chain for a 10-month project (April 2022 to February 2023) to discover how to prevent and reduce the risk of edible food being wasted. The project resulted in nine potential solutions for testing in a range of commercial environments, and strong trusting relationships between businesses, the City and all partners.

CFIL was made possible by a collaboration with business participants, City staff from Engineering Solid Waste and Sustainability Group's Solutions Lab, along with partners Emily Carr University (ECU) and the Vancouver Economic Commission's Economic Transformation Lab (VEC-ETL). The project is informed by the Zero Waste 2040 Strategic Plan, which highlights the need to contribute to "existing and new collaborations across broad sectors of society and industry".

CFIL's intent was to help participating businesses:

- **Explore ways to risk-proof their business** 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.
- Learn ways to **adjust to rapid change** and uncertainty.
- **Inform future policies** to prevent and reduce wasted food in the food supply chain.
- Develop innovative food waste solutions that **show leadership** in their industry.
- Contribute to the formation of an **industry-led taskforce to solve wasted food** in Vancouver.

External Funding:

In May 2021, the City was awarded a US\$100,000 Game Changer grant from [Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance](#) (CNCA) to support the reduction of avoidable wasted food by Vancouver businesses, and the advancement of a low-carbon, equitable circular economy of food, which is work outlined in the Zero Waste 2040 strategic plan.

An additional CA\$90,000 was awarded by [Mitacs](#) through [VEC's Economic Transformation Lab](#) in March 2022 to enable the project to hire graduate students at Emily Carr University of Art and Design to support the initiative. The Mitacs funding was administered by Emily Carr.

Project Results:

City staff have led the co-writing of a final report and a solutions toolkit, which will be available to the public and distributed to members of Vancouver's food supply chain. Some of the key learnings and outcomes outlined in the report are as follows:

Learnings:

- Business participants report that they look to the municipality for leadership and support on the food waste issue.
- Individual businesses are in many ways isolated from one another; bringing them together through CFIL helped them see wasted food from a systems perspective and their role within Vancouver's food system. This perspective helped to reveal behavioural and organizational patterns that lead to food being wasted, and supported challenging of some of these patterns.

Outcomes:

- Businesses have taken the initiative to reframe customers' expectations related to buying an overabundance of food and the need for visual perfection.
- Frontline food staff are more engaged and empowered to participate and innovate in the implementation of circular food solutions at their workplaces.
- New relationships are forming between businesses to further explore circular solutions and share best practices.
- Businesses are now making it easier for their food recovery partners to pick up donations by placing more attention and care into their food-sorting practices and spaces.
- Businesses are increasingly open to trying new approaches and experimenting with potential solutions.

Presentations are ongoing as a way to share CFIL processes and results with a variety of stakeholders from government, the food industry and advocates working towards an equitable circular economy of food. Now that the project has ended further discussions with CFIL businesses indicate that there is interest in exploring the possibility of creating a network to expand efforts to prevent and reduce wasted edible food beyond the CFIL group to Vancouver's wider food business sector. As this time there have been 3 exploratory meetings facilitated by VEC and City staff.

Staff would be pleased to provide a presentation to Mayor and Council on this project, if that is of interest.

Background Context:

Wasted food is a significant issue in Vancouver and nation-wide. **It is estimated that the Canadian food industry lost \$39 billion in revenue due to 8.79 million tonnes of avoidable, unplanned food waste in 2019.** In Vancouver, businesses discarded an estimated 25,000 tonnes of edible food in 2019, representing a loss of 37,000 meals. Nearly 1 in 8 Vancouver residents experience food insecurity and this is higher among equity denied residents. Donation of food surpluses by businesses can help lessen the immediate needs of these residents while the root causes of food surpluses and food insecurity are researched, understood and acted upon.

As food prices and supply chain interruptions increase, now is the time to risk-proof supply chains and improve food and financial efficiency. **The World Resources Institute found that for every US\$1 invested in preventing or reducing wasted food, businesses saved US\$14.** Food sector businesses must futureproof their practices and supply chains to mitigate the risks presented by climate change, extreme weather events, and supply chain disruptions. The Circular Food Innovation Lab provided an opportunity to join forces with like-minded businesses in order to co-develop new strategies and practices that address the sources of food waste.

For more information on CFIL please visit: vancouver.ca/food-innovation-lab. If you have any questions about this project, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.



Taryn Scollard | P.Eng., MBA
Deputy General Manager – Safety & Operations

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