

From: "Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>
To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
Date: 9/20/2023 8:21:32 PM
Subject: Council Memo - Plant-Based Procurement Motion – Status Update - RTS#14774
Attachments: ACCS - GM - Memo (Council) - Plant-based Procurement - RTS 014774 (2023-10-20).pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Attached please find a memo from Sandra Singh, GM, Arts Culture and Community Services regarding an update on the Plant-Based Procurement Motion – RTS 14774. A few key points:

- In November 2021, Council passed a motion directing staff to report back on how shifts toward more plant-based food procurement - based on recommendations from a Vancouver Humane Society report - can save the City on costs and greenhouse gas emissions.
- City and Park Board staff are already actively increasing plant-based food procurement in a gradual way based on operational parameters, consumer demand, and equity considerations (e.g., some City facilities report vegetarian and/or vegan meals now make up to 30-40% of all meals served).
- Given the need for equity-centred approaches and responding to end user demand, the City cannot adopt the specific food procurement directions outlined in the VHS report.
- Staff have and are continuing to move towards plant-based procurement, recognizing dietary transitions may look different for each of the City's and Park Board's procurement streams.

Should Council have any further questions please contact Sandra directly and she will make sure to respond through the regular weekly Q&As.

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 xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

September 20, 2023

TO: Mayor & Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Interim Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Steve Jackson, Acting General Manager, Board of Parks and Recreation
Patrice Impey, General Manager, Finance, Risk & Supply Chain Management
Doug Smith, Acting General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability
Alexander Ralph, Chief Procurement Officer and Director, Supply Chain Management
Meg O'Shea, Senior Manager, Vancouver Economic Commission
Shehzad Somji, Assistant Secretary Treasurer, Vancouver School Board

FROM: Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: Plant-Based Procurement Motion – Status Update

RTS #: 14774

PURPOSE

This memo provides an update on staff work to advance Council's motion *Plant-based purchasing savings for City and Climate* (November 2, 2021; RTS 014774).

BACKGROUND

On November 2nd, 2021, Council passed a [motion](#) declaring the various social, economic, and environmental benefits of plant-based procurement, and directing staff to:

- Report back with a policy on how a partial shift to plant based procurement can save the City on costs and greenhouse gas emissions, and consider one or all of the following procurement shifts as proposed by the Vancouver Humane Society in their report, [Increasing Plant-Based Purchasing at the Municipal Level: A Cost-Benefit Analysis](#).

- Option 1: a 20% reduction in procurement of all animal-based products;
 - Option 2: a 20% reduction in procurement of the most cost-intensive animal-based products; or
 - Option 3: a 20% reduction in procurement of the most carbon-intensive animal-based products.
- Share the report back with Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, Vancouver Economic Commission, and Vancouver School Board for information.

Staff have reviewed the Vancouver Humane Society (VHS) report and gathered information on the City's policy context for food procurement, equity considerations for food procurement, and other City and Park Board leadership on food systems-related climate change.

DISCUSSION

Policy context for food procurement in the City of Vancouver

Current food procurement practices

City and Park Board staff are actively increasing plant-based food procurement in alignment with the VHS report's recommendations. Our Procurement Policy guides procurement by pursuing the best value through supplier selection and purchases that align with the City's priorities and long-term strategic goals, including sustainable and ethical procurement considerations. Supply Chain Management procurement staff support City and Park Board facility staff by facilitating supplier selection and procuring the requested foods. Facility staff are responsible for understanding clientele needs and demands and work with procurement to determine the type of food to be purchased.

While there are no baseline metrics, vegetarian meals now make up to 30-40% of all meals served at some City facilities. Offering more plant-based protein options aligns with Canada's Food Guide; however, menus are largely determined by operational parameters, consumer demand, and equity considerations. That said, the current uptake of vegetarian and vegan meals is indicative of gradually growing demand. See Appendix A for facility specific initiatives and constraints.

Financial implications related to food procurement

Food procurement is a small percentage of the City's overall annual spend. In 2022, the City (including VPD, VPL, and Parks) spent approximately \$7.3M on food, beverage and associated services and equipment, which is less than 1% of the City's annual spend.

By reducing animal-based products, the VHS report suggests annual cost savings of \$19,864 and \$98,473 with Options 2 and 3, respectively, and revenue growth of \$427,800 for both options. However, City staff have not verified these estimates. Operator feedback suggests that any cost efficiencies may be offset by impacts to consumer demand resulting from major food offering changes, and may not result in predicted savings or revenue projections.

Equity considerations in food procurement

Any proposed changes to food offerings should not further burden populations already disproportionately impacted by climate change, food insecurity, and other inequities. The reduction of animal-based products may result in decreased choice and access to animal-based culturally appropriate foods, especially for residents who rely solely on the City's low cost meal programs. Animal-based products also generally provide more protein per calorie, which may be desired for food insecure individuals. Conversely, offering plant-based options in addition to animal-based options, and responding to consumer demand for plant-based options, protects and promotes dietary choice.

City and Park Board leadership on food systems and climate change

Worldwide, food systems account for an estimated 25–30% of total carbon emissions. Research has demonstrated that a key lever to reduce these emissions is adopting diets low in animal products. For the City of Vancouver, only a very small portion (roughly 0.05%) of the carbon emissions that the City reports on annually (known as Scope 1 and 2 emissions) are related to food. The reason for the low number is that most food emissions are generated through the production and transportation of food, which generally happens outside the City boundaries (known as Scope 3 emissions). Food waste that is brought to the Vancouver Landfill is managed with a methane collection system, which creates renewable gas and limits emissions.

Nevertheless, the City can still lead by example through its food procurement policy and enable our residents to make low-carbon dietary choices. With that in mind, staff have advanced many food procurement-related initiatives aimed at reducing food-related climate impacts (see Appendix A). Some examples include:

- In 2012, the City adopted a policy that embeds sustainability and ethical considerations into the procurement process. For example, in 2022, the majority of procurement vendors were required to note how their services or operations aligned with the City's environmental priorities. This policy was updated in 2019 to include animal welfare.
- In 2019, a staff-led Solutions Lab explored the City's role in supporting food-related GHG reduction with approaches that are equity-based.
- In 2022, the Circular Food Innovation Lab (CFIL) worked with 18 Vancouver-based food businesses and organisations to co-design and prototype potential solutions to reduce and prevent wasted food and increase circularity. Staff are looking to establish a cross-sectoral circular economy of food coalition that builds on the work of CFIL.
- The 2022 Vancouver Plan includes a policy to address climate change, biodiversity, water systems, and waste management through food system interventions.

NEXT STEPS

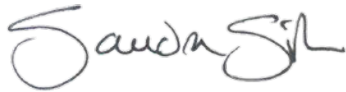
Staff will continue to advance this work in 2023 and 2024, including:

- Continue to respond to residents' willingness to transition from animal to plant-based foods while encouraging low GHG-emitting food options;
- Pursue, accelerate, and improve lower GHG-emitting procurement practices;
- Continue to explore best practices to track and report on food-related GHG emissions.

FINAL REMARKS

The recommendations from the VHS report has catalysed conversations around equity, food choice, and planetary health. Given the need for equity-centred approaches and responding to end user demand, the City cannot adopt the specific food procurement directions outlined in the VHS report. However, staff have and are continuing to move towards plant-based procurement, recognising dietary transitions may look different for each food procurement stream.

If Council requires further information, please feel free to contact me directly at sandra.singh@vancouver.ca and we will provide response through the weekly Council Q&A.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandra Singh'.

Sandra Singh, General Manager
Arts, Culture, and Community Services

sandra.singh@vancouver.ca

APPENDIX A

Summary of City and Park Board plant-based food procurement leadership

Department	Facility/ Purpose	Procurement Requirements Decision Model	Steps to Reduce Procurement-related GHG Impacts	Constraints
Arts, Culture, and Community Services	Carnegie Centre (low cost meal program 365 days/year)	Carnegie chef (ACCS staff)	There are strictly vegetarian or vegan breakfasts and dinners two days a week. A vegetarian option is always offered at lunch (about 20-30% of meals served) and effort is underway to also have a strictly vegetarian or vegan lunch one to two days a week.	Equity constraints outlined above. Meals that are only vegetarian or vegan have good turnout, but have lower turnout than meals where animal-based products are offered.
	Gathering Place (low cost meal program 365 days/year)	Gathering Place chef (ACCS staff)	There has been more focus on increasing vegetarian options in the last two years. Currently, all three meals have a vegetarian option and about 30-40% of meals served are vegetarian.	Gradual introduction of plant-based foods and increasing cost of animal-based products are driving more plant-based food procurement; however, this is balanced with client feedback and the above equity considerations.
	Evelyne Saller Centre (low cost meal program 365 days/year)	Third party (currently contracted to Aramark)	A new contract was established with Aramark in 2022 that included a requirement to offer vegan/, vegetarian options with each meal with reporting on sustainable/local food, as well as food waste.	There is limited uptake of vegetarian meals that may be related to equity considerations (e.g., approximately 650 meals are served daily, with only 12-15 orders for vegetarian meals).
	Civic Theatres (Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Orpheum, Vancouver Playhouse)	VCT Food and Beverage Manager (ACCS staff)	Dairy alternatives are offered for tea and coffee.	Food procurement is limited, comprising snacks and beverages. The opportunities to lower GHG options within these items have focused on reusable containers and delivery.

Board of Parks and Recreation	Golf course and park restaurants (seven dine-in and event facilities)	Food and Beverage Manager (Parks staff)	Across sites, staff have actively increased plant-based procurement in recent years including running a PB-grown salad program and integrating plant-based options (e.g., plant based gelato, baked goods, proteins- burgers, etc.). Some actions resulted from the Concession Strategy , which also identified actions to improve the sustainability of these food service operations.	While some plant-based options are well received, staff have noted additional shifts toward plant-based foods may impact customer satisfaction if animal-based products are not offered.
	Concession stands (operated in parks, 10 seasonal and 3 year-round)	Food and Beverage Manager (Parks staff), operations overseen by third parties		
	Community centre cafes, and snack bars (13 locations) and programming (e.g., events, community kitchens etc.)	Community Centre Association staff		
City-Wide	Catering and food purchases by staff for engagement events and meetings	Decentralised decision-making by staff; no consistent guidance or tracking available	The 2020 Green Operations 2.0 plan identifies actions to develop and implement low carbon catering guidelines for City-hosted meetings and events that accommodate culturally appropriate requirements/ foods. The Plan sets goal of 25% of all corporate spend on products and materials to be low or no carbon.	Action not started due to lack of resourcing. Also determined to be low priority during period of negligible catering purchases given lack of in-person engagements and meetings during ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.