

Vancouver Food Policy Council All Candidates' Questionnaire



The Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC) is an advisory group to Vancouver City Council, providing ideas and policy recommendations toward creating a thriving local food system. The primary goal of the VFPC is to examine how our local food system operates and provide ideas and policy recommendations to Vancouver City Council on how it can be improved. VFPC is comprised of passionate people from various sectors of the local food system. Members include farmers, food distributors, nutritionists, processors, waste managers, activists, and academics engaged in the food system. The VFPC functions as a bridge between citizens and civic officials, coming together to work on food policy initiatives that benefit all Vancouverites.

Candidate Name: Janet Fraser
Office Seeking: School Board Trustee
Party Affiliation (if any): Green
Public Website: www.janetfraser.ca

Please complete the questionnaire and send back to us at info@vancouverfoodpolicycouncil.ca. We'll post your responses on our blog, and on the wall at our All Candidates Forum Oct 15th.

General Questions:

1. Will you endorse the Vancouver Food Strategy and/or the Park Board Local Food Action Plan if you are elected?

As a school trustee I would support all the areas of the Vancouver Food Strategy that apply to our public schools.

2. What actions in the VFS and/or LFAP would you focus on first?

I would focus on:

1. Increasing opportunities for gardens at schools, while ensuring all school gardens are well maintained and used for educational programs. There should be opportunities for school gardens to engage with their neighbourhood, for example to improve access to local food for neighbours who may be particularly vulnerable or isolated.
2. Increasing the percentage of local and sustainable foods purchased for school facilities.

3. What have you already done for food in your community?

As Sir Wilfrid Laurier Elementary School PAC Co-Chair I worked with our school principal to organise the design, funding and building of our school garden. I successfully applied for a City of Vancouver Neighbourhood Grant and hosted a celebration of our first garden harvest in September 2013.

<http://www.vsb.bc.ca/district-news/sir-wilfrid-laurier-elementary-school%E2%80%99s-first-garden-harvest>

As Laurier Annex PAC Chair the PAC provided funding to bring "Project Chef" to our entire school. I was fortunate to be a volunteer with Chef Barb and cook two meals with my children's classes.

4. Given the many priorities of a municipal government, how do you feel food can contribute to our city?

Green school board trustees plan to make sure all school cafeterias and breakfast/lunch programs provide affordable, healthy and nutritious food as not all schools are following the BC guidelines for food and beverage sales. We also want to encourage opportunities for students to build skills for the future, for example in gardening and food production – looking to build a sustainable food system for the future.

Issues Based Questions:

5. Given the Greenest City Action Plan's goal "to ensure that the majority of residents live within a five-minute walk of a basket of fresh produce" and the Vancouver Food Strategy's goal to "improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents", what initiatives would you use to support these goals?

Vancouver has schools in every neighbourhood and so can contribute to improving access to affordable, local food. Most children eat at least one meal a day at school and Green school trustees will work to ensure that food provided at schools is healthy, affordable and culturally diverse. Programs such as "Project Chef" and "Growing Chefs!" are already bringing great food programs to our schools and we will look for ways to continue and improve their work.

6. Given Metro Vancouver's upcoming 2015 organics ban, what initiatives would you support to get us to zero food waste?

At the school board I would ensure that all the board facilities can properly handle organics waste, while trying to reduce the amount of organics waste produced.

7. Given that Vancouver has a rich urban agriculture community (e.g. community gardens, urban farming, beekeeping, backyard chickens) what is our biggest missed opportunity to this point?

I would like to see more opportunities for schools to use their grounds to collaborate with the urban agriculture community. Such collaborations would benefit the students and school staff, as well as the local community.

8. How would you as a municipal politician work with other levels of government on issues that may be considered outside of Vancouver's jurisdiction e.g. ALR, raising welfare rates, GMOs, migrant farm labour, others?

As a member of the Green Party I would work with my colleagues to build connections and collaborate on these issues.

9. What role do you think local governments play in supporting healthy and sustainable food in schools?

At the school board I would:

1. Ensure that all food options provided for students are healthy options, for example by fully implementing the "Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools".
2. Increase opportunities for gardens at schools, while ensuring all school gardens are well maintained and used for educational programs. There should be opportunities for school gardens to engage with their neighbourhood, for example to improve access to local food for neighbours who may be particularly vulnerable or isolated.
3. Increase the percentage of local and sustainable foods purchased for school facilities.
4. Support programs such as "Project Chef" and "Growing Chefs!" that teach students how to prepare healthy meals.

10. The Vancouver Food Strategy and Talk Food To Us program engaged thousands of residents in the development of the strategy. What kind of engagement process would you utilize in food policy work?

The school board has an established network for consulting with its stakeholders, for example partners, collaborators and advocates for public education. To engage in discussion for a food policy strategy the board would reach out to its current stakeholders as well as those working for a just and sustainable food system in Vancouver. The engagement process would depend on the scope of the policy work undertaken.