

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: Mischa Oak
Office Seeking: School Board Trustee
Party Affiliation(if any): Green Party
Public Website: www.voteoak.com

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?

I support the goals of the Vancouver Food Strategy and will look for ways for the Vancouver public school system to support the goals and implement programs at all Vancouver schools.

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

As school trustee, I will focus on affordable access to nutritious food throughout the school district, and on providing all students with opportunities to learn skills to support personal and local food production and processing.

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

We Green school trustee candidates plan to bring a focus on food policy into our public schools, by proposing a district-wide food strategy to 1) create affordable and nutritious food opportunities for all students, at all schools 2) teach students local food production and food processing, by seeking opportunities to expand school garden and food growing and processing programs

Issues Based Questions:

4. 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?

Schools are a great place to help bring this goal to life. My personal focus on food policy will be affordable access to nutritious food for all students, including those living in poverty that fall outside of the inner-city designated school system. These student's needs are currently not being met.

Many elementary schools follow the guidelines of the BC Food & Beverage Guidelines; however, many high school cafeterias fail to meet the guidelines. I will work for a district-wide food affordable and nutritious strategy and plan.

There is an opportunity for increased community collaboration with school gardens and food programs and to use this land to support the goal of accessible fresh produce.

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

Expand the trial food composting program to include all schools in Vancouver and seek ways to provide the infrastructure to succeed with this goal.

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 all schools participating in gardens and in food growing and processing programs. A district-wide strategy is needed, currently programming depends on local school staff, instead of being facilitated by the Board.

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?

I will seek opportunities for the School Board, City and Park Board to pool resources and support a city-wide strategy to engage students and the community in local food production (using land for garden space and extending programs in food production beyond the isolated schools)

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

1. School district-wide strategy to provide access to affordable and nutritious food to all students in the city, regardless of school
2. Support "Farm to School" and "Farm to Cafeteria" programs
3. Provide opportunities for all students in Vancouver to learn gardening and food processing skills
4. Cooperation between different levels of government to increase access to garden space and food distribution hubs

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?

Consultation with infrastructure experts, local community organizations already doing this work, and other school districts focussing on these goals, to develop a sound and realistic strategy to meet Food Strategy goals into Vancouver schools and support the community goals.