

## 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: Pete Fry**  
**Office Seeking: Councillor**  
**Party Affiliation(if any): Green Party of Vancouver**  
**Public Website: [petefry.ca](http://petefry.ca), [vote.vangreens.ca](http://vote.vangreens.ca)**

Please complete the questionnaire and send back to us at [info@vancouverfoodpolicycouncil.ca](mailto:info@vancouverfoodpolicycouncil.ca). We'll post your responses on our blog, and on the wall at our All Candidates Forum Oct 15<sup>th</sup>.

### General Questions:

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

Yes, I will endorse, uphold and hopefully expand the Strategy [2]

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

As a long term resident of Strathcona/DTES, my focus has always been food access and food security in our community, given our sizeable low-income population. While it isn't technically a food desert, for years the DTES has suffered from a dearth of good healthy and inexpensive food options.

I also find the issue of (particularly pre-consumer) food waste to be quite appalling. I support the long standing idea of an expanded food distribution hub on the False Creek Flats, ideally coupled with a year round public market and a food business incubator - with an end goal that they might expand upon our food recovery abilities.

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

Over the years, in my role as (former) Chair of the Strathcona Residents' Association and as a community activist and volunteer I have raised quite a bit of money for food security programs at Strathcona Community Centre, specifically I have organized a number of events with proceeds going to either the Backpack Program or the Breakfast Club. As a committee member on the DTES LAPP I consistently supported the notion of improved food access in the community, particularly in Chinatown with the pressures of condo development and the risks that might present to elders in the community as the stock of affordable groceries and diners begin to get replaced by boutiques and upmarket restaurants

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

In the immediate, I think food contributes to our sense of connectedness and community, in many different contexts, I've found "breaking bread" to be one of the best tools for opening up communication and understanding. In a larger sense, engaging cities with food systems contextualizes their role in food production, land use, water and resource use by — as farmer philosopher Wendel Berry noted — allowing citizens to become farmers by proxy. Of course food (policy) also plays a huge role in environmental sustainability, particularly where local regional food sources can mitigate the GhGs associated with food importing and food waste.

### 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?

My impression of farmer's markets in the city is that while they are great and well-enjoyed, suffer from declined attendance in non-summer months which make them unsustainable as a business model for small producers to attend and staff. Within the parameters of the Vancouver Charter, I would be supportive of an adjusted mill rate that might prioritize bricks and mortar healthy food outlets with a local supplier priority for year round access. I have witnessed successful mobile produce vendors in Asia, who travel through residential neighbourhoods selling fresh local produce (albeit with a loudspeaker announcing their arrival) — and can't help but wonder if a mobile vendor program (without the loudspeaker and perhaps pedal or EV powered) might work here? This would be quite different from a food delivery program like SPUD, an actual mobile stand (like a food truck, but a bit more transitory) where shoppers could choose their produce then and there.

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

I think we have done a pretty good job of catching up to the rest of the region and organic waste reduction, although we obviously need to prioritize MURBs, which I understand is about to happen. I'm very inspired by some of what I see coming out of Recycling Alternatives and the use of thermophillic digesters to compost organic waste from commercial food courts, but we need to expand upon this, and expand opportunities for business owners and commercial haulers to meet the goal.

I also feel very strongly that we need to address the issue of pre-consumer food waste, which I understand to be between 40 and 50% — through food gleaning and recovery that might repurpose food waste for re-use in either community kitchens; food distribution outlets like Quest or the Food Bank; or via a food business incubator find new innovative uses like bio fuel or... (see [7])

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 see a number of missed/emerging opportunities:

- Stormwater diversion for urban agriculture, and mitigating impact on our drainage infrastructure
- Exploring new non-traditional crops like algae and insects as an inexpensive and environmentally sustainable food source for either humans or animals. These non-traditional crops could be fed using recovered food waste.
- Youth employment opportunities, providing highschool aged kids with good summer jobs where they can learn about farming, food systems and production while getting exercise outside, getting work experience and earning money
- Indoor agriculture, with new Light Emitting Diode advances (see Phillips), indoor farming is becoming a cost effective year-round option. In conjunction with stormwater diversion this could be a practical solution for beautify and 'greening' new construction. Imagine an apartment foyer or even underground parking lot with a glass walled in bright green garden - providing cheer, light, security and food!

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?

The Green Party support and will advocate for raising the provincial welfare rates and banning GMO plants and seed from the city. I and my fellow candidates would work with other levels of government to promote migrant worker rights and protect the ALR - as a party we believe in participatory democracy and working with others, regardless of partisanship.

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

My opinion on this is largely based on my experience working with Strathcona Community Centre's food security programs — frankly, I am shocked that local government have not played much of a role in supplying healthy and sustainable food and I would support them doing so in the future. As to the school system in

general - I don't have kids, nor am I immediately familiar with what they supply in the school system and would defer to my school board candidate colleagues.

*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?*

It seems to me the engagement strategy so far has been quite effective. I would suggest more hands on workshops, tours of food distribution hubs and food business incubators and opportunities to see food waste first hand would be very engaging and instructive. Of course, nothing beats cooking together and breaking bread together — always a great way to engage folk!