

Dear Candidate,

Congratulations again on your candidacy for Ottawa City Council in the upcoming election. You should have already received a letter from the Ottawa Food Policy Council (OFPC) introducing itself as a potential resource and recommending how you might consider including food systems thinking into your campaign and in your future work as a Councillor. “Good Food,” which we use interchangeably with “high-quality food,” is defined as fresh, accessible, affordable, culturally relevant, minimally processed, as local as possible, and ecologically grown. As promised, we are contacting you once again to find out if and how you are planning on integrating Good Food in your electoral platform and as a priority once elected.

As outlined in our previous letter, there are many ways that the City of Ottawa can improve the local food system and increase resident access to Good Food. If elected, early in your term on City Council, you will participate in adding items to the legislative agendas of the Committees to which you have been appointed. At this time, we urge you to approach this crucial exercise with a food systems lens and bring forward the priorities below. A food system lens includes all aspects of the food cycle, from decisions that are made about food production, through to harvesting, processing, distribution, retail, preparation, food service, consumption, and disposal.

If you intend to champion policy- and decision-making that prioritizes Good Food in Ottawa, please indicate below the associated issues that you support.

1. Increase the ability of residents and communities to grow, produce, and harvest their own food

Examples include: continuing to increase the number of community gardens and growing plots in the City;; planting more fruit/food-producing trees on city lands for community harvest;; allowing food-producing plants to be grown in planter boxes

Potential Committees: Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, Community and Protective Services Committee, Environment and Climate Protection Committee

Yes

2. Ensure access to Good Food in public spaces, while also supporting local producers

Examples include: changing the City’s procurement policies to increase the selection and purchase of both locally produced and processed food in public spaces;; revisiting contracts with transnational corporations to ensure the promotion and sale of energy- dense and nutrient-rich foods and beverages

Potential Committees: Environment and Climate Protection Committee, Transportation Committee, Finance and Economic Development Committee, Community and Protective Services Committee (Purchasing Bylaw)

Yes

3. Support comprehensive food literacy programs and reduce opportunities for negative impacts on food literacy

Examples include: limiting marketing to kids in public spaces they frequent (arenas, recreational complexes, etc.); supporting the creation and animation of community kitchens for both adults and children

Potential Committees: Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, Finance and Economic Development Committee, Community and Protective Services Committee, Ottawa Public Library Board

Yes

4. Reduce and divert food waste while increasing composting and recycling

Examples include: enhancing opportunities for composting within the City of Ottawa (e.g., Green Bin program, community gardens, community composting sites on City land, connecting local farmers with businesses to reduce waste); supporting community harvests and food sharing programs;; collaborating with Ottawa Public Health to include considerations for food sharing, composting, and equipment plans in food premise buildings

Potential Committees: Environment and Climate Protection Committee, Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee

Yes

5. Strengthen land use policies and protect farmland

Examples include: supporting policies for densification to prevent urban sprawl on rural farmlands;; supporting strong farmland protection, including small land holdings to remain within agricultural zoning in the rural area of Ottawa;; supporting farmers' markets, promoting local food, and increasing opportunities for new farmers

Potential Committees: Planning Committee, Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, Community and Protective Services Committee

Yes

6. Enhance City supports for sustainable livelihoods

Examples include: strongly supporting sustainable livelihoods through social and community services such as community health and resource centres, community houses, healthy and affordable food programs

like Good Food Box, mobile and farmers' markets, and food banks and emergency food cupboards;; prioritizing affordable housing and transportation

Potential Committees: Community and Protective Services Committee, Finance and Economic Development Committee

Yes

The OFPC aims to hold the newly-formed City Council accountable to their commitments to Good Food and the priorities highlighted above, as they will help to develop healthy and sustainable food systems in the City of Ottawa.

As individuals who care deeply about the health and sustainability of our community, we will be happy to work with you and provide resources and examples of how other Canadian cities are realizing these goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into your campaign priority setting. We look forward to your response and to working with you.

Regards, Chris Evans Chair, OFPC

**Response to Ottawa Food Policy Council (OFPC) questionnaire by Judi Varga-Toth,
Candidate for Ward 5 West-Carleton-March**

It is my honour and pleasure to whole-heartedly support your mandate. I have been involved as a small business owner in the food sector, and a community volunteer, in supporting local producers, buy local campaigns such as Savour Ottawa, and all initiatives that make access to healthy local food possible.


Judi Varga-Toth

Ward 5 Candidate for Ottawa City Council