

Plant Based Treaty policies - Anita

Introduction

Hi, my name is Anita Krajnc. I'm a Toronto resident, part of Bain Coop, in Toronto Danforth, Ward 14. I'm the global campaign coordinator for the Plant Based Treaty. Our mission is to promote a shift towards a just, plant-based food system that would enable us to live safely within our planetary boundaries and reforest the Earth. Our vision is a global Plant Based Treaty attached to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to enable a plant-based food system. A second goal is for cities and institutions to implement best practices in plant-based food policies and rewilding.

Toronto aims to show climate leadership by setting an ambitious net zero target by 2040 and for taking action on food emissions. We applaud you for taking a big step by being part of C40 cities Good Food Declaration and for signing the Cool Food Pledge thereby committing Toronto to reducing GHG emissions from corporate food procurement by 25 percent by 2030. Thank you also for referring to the Plant Based Treaty in your committee's Report on Action in which you found that "of the 40 items listed [in the Plant Based Treaty], ...28 of the items are outside of the City's jurisdictional powers but of the 12 remaining items, the City is addressing all of them." Please let us know: which of the 12 Plant Based Treaty proposals fall within the city's jurisdiction.

We encourage the City of Toronto to accelerate the Cool Food Pledge goal and reach it sooner than 2030 and also ask the committee to recommend that the City Council sign the Plant Based Treaty. For example, NYC's goal is 33% reduction in food emissions by 2030 and it has already surpassed it.

There is great urgency this decade.

Key findings of the IPCC 6th assessment report include:

- That it's code red for humanity
- That we are projected to hit 1.5 C by 2030 (there's a high chance we could hit it sooner)
- That we are projected to hit 2C by 2040
- That there's a methane emergency (and a majority of methane emissions come from the food sector)
- That all three GHG emissions are accelerating

Johan Rockstrom, co-author of Breaking Boundaries and Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, states: "The 1.5°C threshold is a physical limit, not a political target." There are 16 major tipping points on the planet with different temperature rises signifying different risks of points of no return. There are five tipping points that are especially high risk and could happen quite soon, even before 1.5-2°C warming: namely Greenland Ice Sheet Collapse, West Antarctic Ice Sheet Collapse, Tropical Coral Reef Die-Off, Northern Permafrost Abrupt Thaw and Labrador Sea Current Collapse.

30 cities have signed the Plant Based Treaty including Rainbow Lake, Alberta, Los Angeles and three European capitals Amsterdam, in the Netherlands, Belfast in Northern Ireland and Edinburgh in Scotland

What can you do?

We ask the committee to please consider recommending that the Toronto city council and mayor present a motion for the city of Toronto to endorse the Plant Based Treaty

Edinburgh endorsed the Plant Based Treaty in 2023 and passed an Action Plan in January 2024. Edinburgh has partnered with Klimato to introduce carbon labeling in schools and universities, they also agreed to meet with Greener by Default. Edinburgh's Action Plan includes sections on awareness raising and capacity building, food waste reduction, increased provision of plant based food, and influence and leadership (on spreading the Plant Based Treaty to other cities). Edinburgh called on Euro cities to join them in endorsing, they wrote to the Scottish Prime Minister inviting Scotland to endorse and wrote to sister cities.¹

Amsterdam endorsed the Plant Based Treaty in January 2024

- Amsterdam will enter a covenant with major employers, public institutions such as hospitals, community centres, and care institutions in Amsterdam titled 'Amsterdam: healthy, fair, and sustainable food city,' that could include:
- All employees, visitors, and patients can obtain full plant-based meal options in all publicly funded institutions from 2024;
- All restaurants and catering at public institutions commit to a Vegan Friday from 2024;
- All restaurants and catering commit by 2030 to the animal-plant protein ratio set in Amsterdam;
- To organize an annual plant-based conference with care institutions, schools, universities, and other public institutions in Amsterdam.

R1: Relinquish

1. **Explore the decision making process for slaughterhouses within the city.** Look at how the environment is used in those applications and whether the city can decline applications based on particle pollution, run off, and production and consumption-based emissions. Ryding Regency shut down for 'risk of injury to human health' and 'selling an article of food that had in or on it any poisonous or harmful substance'. Previous Chief planner Gregg Lintern (2017-2023) noted the slaughterhouses 'might be problematic' for local residents. Residents complain about the stench from St. Helens slaughterhouse. For example, Roy Hulli said that he needs to keep his windows closed to keep the odors out during the Summer even though he lives a km away. "It's the smell of death. Doesn't compare to anything else."²

¹ See appendix one on pages 9-12:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1DWLlo_JW54CymFss-CexHBdAYemKHt0?usp=drive_link

²

https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/despite-local-anger-new-stockyards-slaughterhouse-is-likely-here-to-stay-city-tells-residents/article_064b39b8-eb25-5605-ae80-81318f885052.html

R2: Redirect

2. **Serve 100% plant based meals at council premises.** Commit Toronto city council meetings to fully plant based. Exmouth in the UK is doing 100% plant-based catering at climate events and meetings.
3. **Serve plant based meals at public events such as** festivals on City Hall property and the Toronto islands.
4. **Increase the procurement of plant-based proteins by the city by certain percentages.** The Committee's Report on action notes the city serves 7 million meals annually to shelters, retirement and early childhood education centres. The C40 Cities' Food accelerator program commits Toronto to an Eat Lancet "Planetary Health Diet" which is predominantly plant based. Plant Based Treaty asked you to consider the optimal: **Plant Based Eatwell Guide. Greener by Default.** Promote Canada Food Guide: taking out dairy milk: should the council not be removing dairy from the council premises and the institutions they provide meals for; bad for health and environment. What reason to keep it? If it's only personal preference then the question is how do we shift it to something different. In council preferences go 100% dairy free; in other premises start with vegan by default so choice is not taken away. **Vegan Fridays.** Introduce vegan Fridays in institutions you have jurisdiction over like senior homes, shelters and early childhood education.
5. **Promote food justice.** Enhance food justice by providing access to healthy food for all, especially low-income communities of color
6. **Offer businesses incentives, technical assistance, and rewards to expand plant-based offerings.** Organize plant based restaurant week. Promote access to plant-based foods including in communities that lack adequate access. Reward businesses that demonstrate leadership in increasing the availability of plant-based proteins and engaging the public on their benefits.
7. **Introduce carbon labeling.**
8. **Public education.** Include plant based recipes in city newsletters and social media (don't cost extra). Salford has put our Plant Based Treaty starter guide in community hubs across the city. Toronto could follow or have 1 pager or trifold at libraries, city community centres etc.
9. **Ban high carbon advertising** such as aviation and meat ads on public sites like the TTC.

R3: Restore

10. **Rewilding, community gardens and city orchards.** Increase trees and wildflowers, increase green community projects, wildlife corridors, green rooftops, local growing schemes, work towards biodiversity increases.

Conclusions

When cities endorse the Plant Based Treaty they are becoming part of a global city movement taking action on food impacts which will be a leading force that influences governments and world leaders to take action to make the food system Paris Aligned. When we engage with

countries at global climate talks at COPs and they all want to know what Plant Based Treaty cities are doing. This is an opportunity to influence at the global level.

Notes

A Toolkit for Incorporating Plant-Based Protein Measures in Municipal Climate Action Plans:

<https://www.eli.org/research-report/toolkit-incorporating-plant-based-protein-measures-municipal-climate-action-plans>

“FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact to the approved 2024 Operating and Capital budgets for the Environment and Climate (E&C) Division. Any incremental financial impacts will be included in future year Budget submissions across the three relevant City Divisions (SSLTC, TSSS, and CS).”

GHG emissions: “Worldwide, meat production can emit 50 times more emissions than plant-based foods.” Source: Poore and Nemecek. (2018) Reducing food’s environmental impacts through producers and consumers. Science, v 360:6392.

Attending: Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference - Ottawa - August 18th - 21st, 2024