



Report
Staff Report
The Corporation of the City of Brampton
9/3/2025

Date: 2025-08-27

Subject: **Plant-Based Treaty – Update (RM 76/2024)**

Contact: Marlon Kallideen, Chief Administrative Officer

Report number: CAO's Office-2025-539

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report from Raymond Thomson, Manager, Executive Operations and Special Projects to the Committee of Council Meeting of September 3, 2025, re: **Plant-Based Treaty – Update (RM 76/2024)**, be received; and
2. That staff incorporate language and evaluation criteria into future procurement catering and concession contracts to promote plant-based food options at City of Brampton events and meetings.

OVERVIEW:

- **The City of Brampton endorsed the Plant-Based Treaty in November 2024, becoming the first city in Ontario to adopt the treaty.**
- **The City is working towards the promotion of affordable, culturally relevant plant-based food options across its catering services and public events to advance sustainability, equity and health goals, which involves community engagement.**
- **Cities globally are adopting plant-based food options in public institutions and policies to support climate, health and equity goals, through changes to procurement and catering practices alongside public engagement to encourage dietary shifts.**
- **Plant-Based Food Awareness Week (April 14-20, 2025) raised public awareness through a digital campaign, community events, and local business promotion.**
- **The City is exploring updates to procurement and vendor contracts to support plant-based options, promoting sustainability, health and equity in food services.**

- **The cost of plant-based food options varies depending on menu choices, availability and market pricing.**
- **There are no immediate financial implications associated with the endorsement of the Plant-Based Treaty. However, the promotion and inclusion of plant-based food options within catering and concession contracts will be managed within existing resources or retail pricing.**

BACKGROUND:

The City of Brampton has demonstrated a growing commitment to environmental sustainability through a series of strategic plans and Council decisions such as the Environmental Master Plan, Community Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan and Council declaration of a Climate Emergency.

On November 20, 2024, Council passed a motion (CW422-2024) to endorse the Plant-Based Treaty. The motion acknowledged the urgent need to address food-related emissions, particularly methane from animal agriculture, which contributes significantly to climate change. It also highlighted the role that shifting toward plant-based diets can play in improving health and enhancing food security. As part of the motion, the City committed to integrating plant-based food options in civic events, promoting plant-based awareness campaigns and evaluating plant-based options in municipal facilities.

Additionally, the City has pledged to incorporate plant-based alternatives into its meetings and events. These actions underscore Brampton's recognition of the interconnectedness between climate policy, health and environmental justice. By endorsing the Plant-Based Treaty, Brampton has committed to a healthier and more sustainable future.

Jurisdictional Scan

Across Canada, municipalities are beginning to embrace plant-based food strategies as part of broader efforts to address climate, health and equity priorities, aligning institutional practices and public engagement with sustainable food system goals.

Toronto has taken steps to incorporate plant-based options into its food services. In 2019, the city became a signatory of the World Resources Institute's Cool Food Pledge, committing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from corporate food procurement by 25 percent.

The City of Mississauga has implemented policies that promote healthier food and beverage options within its municipal facilities. While there is no specific mandate exclusively for plant-based foods, the city's initiatives support the inclusion of such options through broader health and sustainability goals.

In November 2021, Vancouver City Council passed a motion titled "Plant-Based Purchasing Savings for City and Climate," directing staff to explore how shifts toward more plant-based food procurement could result in cost savings and greenhouse gas emission reductions.

New York City and London, UK, are actively advancing plant-based food initiatives as integral parts of their climate, health and sustainability goals. New York City focuses on integrating plant-based meals into public institutions such as schools and hospitals. Similarly, London's Mayor's Food Strategy emphasizes increasing the availability and affordability of plant-based options.

Plant-Based Food Awareness Week: April 14 to 20, 2025

The City launched Plant-Based Food Awareness Week from April 14 to 20, 2025, to raise awareness and educate the public about plant-based foods, increase visibility and support for local Brampton-based businesses offering plant-based food options.

Central to the campaign was the creation of a dedicated webpage providing information, recipes and tips and links to local Brampton-based restaurants with vegetarian and vegan food options. In addition, a proclamation at Council on April 9 officially launched the initiative, followed by widespread promotional efforts throughout the week. Plant-Based Food Awareness Week successfully raised awareness, promoted healthier lifestyles and demonstrated Brampton's leadership in climate action. Through this campaign, the City took a first step in educating the public, supporting local businesses and embedding plant-based practices into municipal culture and policy.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The transition toward plant-based food systems involves consideration of environmental, social and economic factors. The City is considering the integration of more plant-based food options across its catering services and public-facing activities as part of its broader commitment to sustainability, equity and health. As part of this shift, the City recognizes the importance of maintaining affordability and cultural relevance, particularly in programs that serve diverse communities.

Plant-Based Foods

Plant-based food options refer to meals and ingredients that are derived entirely from plants, with no animal-derived components such as meat, dairy, eggs or seafood. These foods are composed of vegetables, fruits, legumes (such as beans, lentils, and peas), whole grains (such as rice, quinoa and oats), nuts, seeds and plant-derived oils. They may also include plant-based alternatives to animal products, such as soy or oat-based milk, tofu, tempeh, seitan, plant-based meats and dairy-free cheeses and yogurts.

In catering and institutional food service settings, plant-based options can take many forms, such as vegetable stir-fries, lentil stews, grain bowls, bean-based burgers,

roasted vegetables, salads with plant-based dressings, rice and legume pilafs and hummus with vegetables, baked falafel or edamame.

Public Engagement

Public engagement is a critical component of the City's approach to promoting plant-based diets, recognizing that many residents may not yet be fully aware of their environmental and health benefits. To encourage inclusive and meaningful participation, the City is exploring strategies such as cooking demonstrations and clear messaging at public events.

At the same time, understanding that consumer preferences significantly influence adoption, the City is committed to offering meals that are both appealing and culturally reflective. Collecting community feedback is viewed as an essential step to ensure that catering menus meet residents' expectations and foster trust in new plant-based offerings. Additionally, efforts are underway to identify local companies that can provide plant-based ingredients.

Implications of Plant-Based Foods

The cost implications of plant-based foods are influenced by factors such as menu composition, vendor partnerships and operational modifications. Evidence from research suggests that plant-based meals emphasizing staple ingredients—such as legumes, grains and vegetables—can generally be offered at costs comparable to traditional animal-based meals.

Conversely, the inclusion of processed plant-based alternatives, including meat substitutes and dairy-free products, may lead to an increase in costs ranging from approximately 10 to 25 percent. This variance is based on market pricing and the scale of supplier operations.

Additional considerations include the typically shorter shelf life of fresh produce and the complexities involved in coordinating supply chains, both of which can affect waste management and logistical expenses.

Plant-based meals are known to generate significantly fewer greenhouse gas emissions and require less land and water than animal-based foods. By incorporating these options into public events and catering, the city aims to align its food systems with its environmental and climate goals.

Advancing Plant-Based Priorities

The procurement approach is a central consideration as the City evaluates the potential for expanding plant-based food offerings. This includes a review of existing procurement systems, vendor contracts, and food service infrastructure to identify the changes required to support plant-based catering. The City is examining how plant-based criteria can be integrated into future vendor agreements, ensuring that suppliers are capable of meeting both nutritional and volume requirements.

While current agreements include some support for dietary inclusivity, they stop short of mandating plant-based offerings. By updating vendor requirements, scoring criteria and menu expectations across key contracts, the City can embed sustainability, health and equity into its events and meetings.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

There are no immediate financial implications associated with the endorsement of the Plant-Based Treaty. The promotion and inclusion of plant-based food options within catering and concession contracts will be managed within existing resources.

For example, future procurement of catering contracts may lead to an increase in costs, ranging from approximately 10% to 25% (\$27,400 to \$110,250).

Any associated cost increases related to the catering of plant-based foods are expected to be absorbed within the Operating Department’s approved annual budget on a go-forward basis. Any cost increases associated with plant-based foods concessions will be reflected in the retail price (maintaining the current markup based on Cost of Goods Sold).

Example:

	10% Increase	25% Increase
Catering	\$27,400	\$68,500
Operating Offset	(\$27,400)	(\$68,500)
Total Net Impact	\$0	\$0

Catering based on 2024 actual for summary of catering vendors

	10% Increase	25% Increase
Concessions	\$44,100	\$110,250
User Fee Increase	(\$44,100)	(\$110,250)
Total Net Impact	\$0	\$0

Concessions based on Community Services contract

Purchasing Implications – Purchasing will continue to collaborate with departmental staff to profile the City’s requirements for incorporating and expanding plant-based food offerings within existing and future procurement activities and vendor agreements for City events, catering and concession contracts.

Communications Implications – Staff will continue collaborating with Strategic Communications to develop a communications and engagement plan aimed at raising awareness of the Plant-Based Treaty and communicating any changes to the City’s procurement catering and concession contracts.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

This report supports the City's Environmental Resilience & Sustainability initiative by offering healthy, environmentally friendly plant-based food options through City-catered events or concessions in City facilities. Incorporating plant-based foods is one way the City of Brampton is moving towards a lower carbon footprint and a more environmentally sustainable future.

CONCLUSION:

This report seeks Council endorsement for staff to incorporate language and evaluation criteria to promote plant-based food options in the city's catering and concession contracts. This initiative aligns with the City's adoption of the Plant-Based Treaty in November 2024 and existing environmental resilience & sustainability initiatives.

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