

The Future of Toronto Food Governance

A Community Municipal Election Engagement Kit

The Future of Toronto Food Governance is a growing collective of community members working across Toronto's food system and connected areas, including food access, housing, health, farming, policy, community organizing, and lived experience.



Who We Are

The Future of Toronto Food Governance is a growing collective of community members working across Toronto's food system and connected areas, including food access, housing, health, farming, policy, community organizing, and lived experience.

We came together following the closure of the Toronto Food Policy Council to create space for community conversation about what meaningful food policy governance could look like in Toronto. We are not assuming that one particular structure or model should return. Together, we are identifying shared priorities, strengthening community participation, and exploring what Toronto needs from food governance in the future.

How To Use This Kit

This kit was created to support community participation in Toronto's 2026 municipal election.

1

Choose What Matters to You

Pick one or two food issues that connect to your work, community, or lived experience.

2

Pick the Tool You Need

Use the email template, phone script, question list, or voting records section. You do not need to use everything.

3

Make It Your Own

Choose the questions that feel most useful and personalize them with your own experience, priorities, or community context.

4

Reach Out and Share

Contact candidates, ask for a clear commitment, and share what you learn with your neighbours, networks, or organization.

It is a Critical Moment for Food in Toronto.

Following the closure of the Toronto Food Policy Council, community members and organizations have identified a need for stronger public participation in municipal food policy, better coordination across City divisions and regions, and clearer accountability for food policy commitments.

- Council has directed staff to explore options for a new food advisory body, creating an important opportunity to shape how community voices and food system expertise are included in municipal decision making.
- Toronto has declared food insecurity an emergency, underscoring the scale and urgency of rising food costs, inadequate incomes, housing pressures, and unequal access to nutritious and culturally appropriate food.
- Climate change is placing growing pressure on the food system, affecting food production, supply chains, affordability, infrastructure, and the resilience of communities across the region.
- There is renewed interest in local and regional food systems, including urban agriculture, local procurement, support for growers, and stronger connections between Toronto and surrounding food producing regions.
- Together, these shifts make this a critical moment for food governance in Toronto, with an opportunity to strengthen coordination, accountability, community participation, and long term planning for the city's food system.

Ways to Take Action

You do not need to be a policy expert to participate in the municipal election. Choose an issue that matters to you, ask candidates what they will do about it, and encourage others in your community to do the same.

1. Find Your Ward and Councillor

Your City Councillor represents your ward at Toronto City Council.

Visit toronto.ca/councillors and enter your address to find:

- Your ward
- Your current City Councillor
- Their contact information

You can contact your current Councillor about food priorities in your community now, while also reaching out to candidates running in the 2026 municipal election.

2. Find the Candidates Running in Your Ward

The City of Toronto publishes the official list of candidates running for Mayor, City Councillor, and school board trustee.

Visit toronto.ca/elections and select 2026 Municipal Election List of Candidates to find the candidates running in your ward.

Starting September 1, you can also use MyVote through the City of Toronto Elections website to find election information connected to your address.

3. Choose What Matters to You

You do not need to ask every question in this kit. Choose one or two priorities that connect to your work, community, or lived experience.

You might ask about:

- Food governance and meaningful community participation
- Income, affordability, housing, and access to food
- Land, infrastructure, procurement, and local food
- A resilient and connected city food system

Ways to Take Action

Continued

Personalize your question by sharing why the issue matters to you or what you are seeing in your community.

4. Contact Candidates

You can:

- Email candidates directly
- Call their campaign office
- Ask a question at a candidate debate or community meeting
- Speak with candidates when they visit your neighbourhood or attend community events
- Ask questions through their social media pages
- Invite candidates to visit a community food project, garden, farm, food program, or other local initiative

Use the email template in this kit if you are not sure where to start.

5. Ask for a Clear Commitment

“What will you do as Councillor to increase access to land and infrastructure for community food projects in our ward?”

You can also ask:

“If elected, what food issue are you willing to champion at City Council, and what action will you take?”

6. Share the Conversation

Election engagement works best when more people participate.

- Share these questions with your neighbours, coworkers, organizations, and networks.
- Bring them to community meetings and election events.
- Encourage others to contact the candidates in their own wards.
- Share useful responses and commitments with your community.
- Talk about what you want the future of food policy governance in Toronto to look like.

Candidates need to hear that food matters to Toronto communities. Asking a question is one way to make food visible as an election issue.

Contact Your Reps! Email Template

Hi [Councillor/Candidate Name],

my name is [your name], and i [work/volunteer/organize] with [organization, community, or neighbourhood].

[share 1 to 2 sentences about your connection to food, housing, health, urban agriculture, community work, policy, or another related issue. for example: what you do, what you are seeing in your community, or why toronto's food system matters to you. Send photos of your food initiatives]

I am writing because I want your support for the future of food governance in Toronto.

Community members and organizations have been coming together to discuss what meaningful food policy governance could look like in Toronto. These conversations are not about assuming that one particular model should return. We are asking what kind of structure Toronto needs to strengthen community participation in food policy, improve coordination across the City, and ensure that community priorities are reflected in decisions.

People working across Toronto's food system are facing interconnected challenges related to food affordability, housing and income, access to land and growing space, food infrastructure, funding, local procurement, climate resilience, and coordination across City divisions.

For me, an important priority is:

[ADD THE ISSUE OR PRIORITY THAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU.]

I would like to know:

[INSERT 1 TO 3 QUESTIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY CANDIDATE QUESTION LIST.]

I want Toronto residents and communities to have a meaningful role in shaping the policies and systems that affect how we grow, access, share, and experience food in this city.

Will you support stronger, community informed food policy governance in Toronto, and how would you help advance this work if elected?

Thank you for taking the time to respond. I look forward to hearing how you will support the future of food governance in Toronto.

Best,

[YOUR NAME]

[ORGANIZATION OR COMMUNITY, OPTIONAL]

[WARD OR NEIGHBOURHOOD, OPTIONAL]

Contact Your Reps! Email Template SHORT

Hi [Councillor/Candidate Name],

my name is [your name], and i [work/volunteer/organize] with [organization, community, or neighbourhood].

I am writing because I want your support for the future of food in Toronto.

[share a bit about yourself, your work, or your community and mention the food issue you care deeply about]

People working across Toronto's food system are facing interconnected challenges related to food affordability, housing and income, access to land and growing space, food infrastructure, funding, local procurement, climate resilience, and coordination across City divisions. We are asking Councillors to ensure that community priorities are reflected in decisions and that Toronto residents have a meaningful role in shaping the policies and systems that affect our access to food in this city.

For me, an important priority is:

[choices]

I would like to know:

[choices]

I look forward to your response.

Want an editable google doc version?

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1t-q9jxWdydLXwr68r4_4vaZt-FLUkhim/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=106436197076464806340&rtpof=true&sd=true

copy and paste this link into your browser. It will be available until the 2026 election is over.

Contact Your Reps! Phone Script

Hi, my name is [your name], and I live in [ward or neighbourhood]. [Share a bit about yourself or your work. 1-2 sentences max].

I'm calling because I care about the future of food in Toronto and I'd like to know where [candidate or councillor name] stands on [food issue or priority].

For me, this issue matters because [briefly share your connection, experience, or what you are seeing in your community].

I'd like to ask:

[Choose 1 or 2 questions from the Questions by Theme section.]

For example:

What will you do as Councillor to improve access to affordable food in our ward?

or

If elected, what food issue are you willing to champion at City Council, and what action will you take?

Thank you. I'd really appreciate hearing what [candidate or councillor name] would commit to doing on this issue.

If You Reach Campaign Staff

You can say:

Would you be able to share the candidate's position with me, or have someone follow up with a response?

If You Reach Voicemail

Hi, my name is [your name], and I live in [ward or neighbourhood]. I'm calling because I'd like to know where [candidate name] stands on [food issue].

My question is: [insert one question].

You can reach me at [phone number or email]. Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Remember: You do not need to use this script word for word. Choose the issue that matters to you and make the conversation your own.

The municipal election gives us an opportunity to bring these priorities directly to candidates, ask clear questions, and learn how they plan to support Toronto's food system and the future of food policy governance in the city.

Questions by Theme

Questions for Election based on our community consultation.

These questions are based on the four election themes identified through our August 10th 2026 community consultation.

1. Food Governance and Meaningful Community Participation

- If a motion came to Council to establish a permanent food policy governance body with meaningful community participation, how would you vote?
- How will you ensure people with lived experience of food insecurity, housing insecurity, disability, and other barriers are represented in food policy decisions?
- What will you do to improve coordination between City divisions working on food, urban agriculture, health, poverty reduction, planning, parks, and economic development?
- How will you strengthen accountability and follow through on food policies and commitments already approved by the City?
- How will your office help residents and community organizations navigate City processes when they encounter barriers to food projects?

2. Income, Affordability, Housing, and Access to Food

- What will you do to reduce reliance on emergency food programs and improve access to nutritious and culturally relevant food?
- How will you ensure Toronto's food policies respond to the needs of people experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, and people facing other barriers to accessing food?
- What concrete action would you prioritize during your term to improve access to affordable food in your ward?

Questions by Theme

Continued

3. Land, Infrastructure, Procurement, and Local Food

- How will you reduce permitting, zoning, and other administrative barriers faced by people trying to grow, prepare, or distribute food in Toronto?
- Would you support City investment in LOCAL food infrastructure such as community food hubs, shared commercial kitchens, storage, preservation facilities, and rooftop farms?
- If residents in your ward wanted a community food hub, growing space, or shared kitchen, how would your office help them make it happen?
- How will you use City procurement policies to support healthy, local, sustainable, and culturally relevant food?
- What will you do to strengthen opportunities for urban growers and local farmers to sell food to City programs, institutions, and communities?

4. A Resilient and Connected City Food System

- What will you do to make Toronto's food system more resilient to climate change, emergencies, and disruptions in food supply?
- How will you strengthen connections between Toronto and farmers, growers, municipalities, and food organizations across the surrounding region?
- What will you do to support sustainable and agroecological food production in Toronto?
- How will you support food waste reduction and make better use of food that is currently being lost or discarded?
- How will you support youth involvement, food education, school growing programs, and opportunities for residents to build food knowledge?
- What will you do to make food a more visible priority at City Hall and ensure communities have clear ways to influence decisions about Toronto's food system?

Accessing Voting Records

See How Toronto Councillors Have Voted

What candidates say during an election matters, but you can also look at how current and former City Councillors have voted when issues came before Toronto City Council.

There are two useful tools: the official City of Toronto voting records and the independent Climate Voting Records Toronto tool.

1. City of Toronto Voting Records

The City of Toronto keeps the official record of recorded votes at City Council.

<https://open.toronto.ca/dataset/members-of-toronto-city-council-voting-record/>

You can use the City's Council website to:

- Look up the voting record of a current or former Councillor
- Search for a specific Council issue or agenda item
- See how Councillors voted on recorded motions
- Review the reports, recommendations and decisions connected to an issue
- Check Council and committee attendance

How to Use It

1. Go to the City of Toronto Council website

Search "City of Toronto Council voting records" or visit the Council and Committee Meetings section of the City website.

2. Search by Councillor or issue

If you want to learn about a particular Councillor, look at their voting record.

If you care about a particular issue, try searching relevant terms such as:

- Student nutrition
- Community gardens
- Urban agriculture
- Food insecurity
- Poverty reduction

3. Open the Council item

Looking at the full item can help you understand what Council was actually being asked to decide. An item may contain several motions or amendments, so the final decision does not always tell the whole story.

4. Use what you find to ask questions

For example:

"Council considered [ISSUE] during this term. Can you explain your position on this issue and what you would do differently or continue to support in the next term?"

Accessing Voting Records

Climate Voting Records Toronto

2. Climate Voting Records Toronto

Climate Voting Records Toronto is an independent tool created by ClimateFast using City of Toronto Open Data.

It organizes selected climate related City Council votes into a format that is easier to explore.

You can:

- Search voting records by Councillor
- Search by Council item
- Use a ward map to find your Councillor
- View ClimateFast's scorecard
- Explore selected climate related decisions dating back to 2019

The issues tracked extend beyond environmental policy alone and can include areas such as transit, flooding, social policy and other decisions connected to climate resilience.

How to Use It

1. Find your ward or Councillor

Use the map or search by Councillor.

2. Explore their voting record

Look through the Council items included in the tool and identify issues that matter to you or connect with your community. On the right hand side you will see categories such as food security, cleaner energy, housing for all.

3. Click into the issue

If a vote stands out, look at the original City Council item for more information about what was proposed and decided.

4. Bring it into your conversation with candidates

For an incumbent Councillor, you might ask:

"I noticed you voted [YES/NO] on [ISSUE]. Can you tell me more about that decision and what your position will be moving forward?"

For a candidate who has not served on Council:

"This issue came before Council during the last term. How would you have approached it, and what would you support if elected?"