

Dear (Candidates Name),

Re: Protecting and Supporting Cultural Food Assets and Other Forms of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Vancouver

We, the undersigned members of food justice, poverty reduction organizations, cultural and community groups, businesses, and concerned citizens, representing approximately ____ members are writing to you as a mayoral or council candidate in the upcoming 2022 municipal election to express our shared concern for the future of Cultural Food Assets and intangible cultural heritage in Vancouver, gain insight on your stance on the issue and invite you to consider policy responses that would protect and support cultural food assets and intangible cultural heritage in our communities. Such assets or food traditions represent the very best of Vancouver but are increasingly under the threat of displacement due to mounting pressure from redevelopment and gentrification across the city.

Cultural Food Assets are spaces that maintain and share culture through food and may include small family businesses such as green grocers and cultural restaurants. These businesses provide community members with access to important cultural food items, ranging from produce, herbal medicines, traditional goods and ethnic meals. They also function as vital community spaces, providing community members with access to culturally appropriate resources and supports, including job opportunities. These Cultural Food Assets represent an Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) that refers to the forms of culture that are important to groups of people, embedded in everyday life, and critical in accessing, experiencing and transmitting one's culture. ICH holds a special importance for diasporic populations and equity-denied groups and represents a key foundation in a just food system.

However, due to increased pressure from redevelopment and gentrification, these invaluable cultural food assets are under threat of displacement in many neighbourhoods across Vancouver. Currently, there is no existing comprehensive policy that protects these assets. In response, a number of food justice groups have actively advocated for such policy which resulted in the March 2022, [Placekeeping: Protecting and Supporting Cultural Food Assets and Other Forms of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Vancouver](#), put forward by Councilor Christine Boyle and which passed with unanimous support the rest of city council. But much more work needs to be done.

We are interested in your stance on this issue, as a municipal candidate, and invite you to consider policy responses and solutions that would protect and support these important cultural food assets and intangible cultural heritage in our communities. Attached to this letter is a short 6-question [survey](#) with the results to be made publicly available to all signatories to help them make an informed voting decisions.

Sincerely,

Joyce St Action Network,

Renfrew-Collingwood Food Justice at Collingwood Neighbourhood House

Vancouver Neighbourhood Food Networks