

City of Mississauga

Memorandum



Date: 2025/07/25

To: Chair and Members of the Environmental Action Committee (EAC)

From: Dianne Zimmerman, Environment Manager

Meeting Date: 2025/09/02

Subject: Plant Based Treaty

Background

On March 4, 2025, the local chapter of the Plant Based Treaty delegated at the Environmental Action Committee (EAC), asking for the City's endorsement of the organization's treaty that supports plant-based diets. Staff were directed to further explore and research the Plant Based Treaty (Treaty) and report back to a future EAC meeting (EAC-0005-2025).

The Plant Based Treaty

The [Plant Based Treaty](#) aims to put food systems at the forefront of combating the climate crisis. Individuals, groups, businesses and cities have been invited to endorse the treaty, which is made up of forty (40) suggested proposals divided into three (3) core principles:

- **Redirecting:** Ceasing the expansion of animal agriculture and associated activities that lead to deforestation and ecosystem degradation
- **Relinquishing:** Encouraging a shift towards plant-based food systems by promoting sustainable and ethical consumption patterns
- **Restoring:** Initiating restoration efforts for degraded ecosystems to increase carbon absorption and restore biodiversity

Cities that endorse the Treaty are encouraged to make meaningful change and implement good practices in plant-based food policies and in rewilding within their jurisdiction but are not bound by the proposals.

Several cities have endorsed the Plant Based Treaty, integrating plant-based initiatives into their climate action plans and food purchasing policies. As of July 2025, 41 cities across the world have endorsed the Treaty, primarily in Europe and India. More locally, in November 2024 and in February 2025 respectively, the City of Brampton and Town of Caledon endorsed the Treaty. Brampton plans to integrate a plant-based approach into their climate action plan and Caledon is aiming to improve resident health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Considerations for Endorsement

1. Relationship between Plant-Based Food & Climate Action

Well known organizations such as the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ("IPCC") have noted the benefits of plant-based diets. For one, meat

production often requires the use of extensive grasslands. This typically involves removing trees, taking away a sink for carbon dioxide (CO₂) and releasing the CO₂ stored by these trees.¹ At the same time, cows and sheep emit methane – a potent greenhouse gas – as they digest grass and plants. In contrast, plant-based foods generally use less energy, land, and water, and have lower greenhouse gas intensities than animal-based foods.¹

2. Applicability of Treaty Proposals within the City

Not all the Treaty proposals apply to the city. In fact, twenty-four (24) of the forty (40) proposals are not applicable as Mississauga does not have animal farming, does not border an ocean, and does not control national-level policy and guides. The remaining 40% of proposals align with existing City strategies, plans and declarations (see section below for further details).

3. Alignment with City Plans & Strategies

There are several City plans and strategies that are aligned with the Treaty. These include the [Climate Change Action Plan](#) (identifies actions to reduce emissions and make Mississauga more resilient), [Urban Agriculture Strategy](#) (establishes different pathways to support and encourage urban agriculture throughout Mississauga), as well as the [Parks, Forestry and Environment Master Plan](#) and the Invasive Species Management Plan (support and enhance biodiversity, climate resilience and sustainable land use practices).

Below are a few examples of the alignment between specific treaty proposals and City initiatives:

Proposal	Alignment with City Initiatives
Declare a climate emergency	Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and, later that year, approved the City's first comprehensive climate plan
Placing food security as a priority	Council declared food insecurity an emergency in 2024
Developing a food strategy for Climate Action Plans to prioritize plant-based food & public education	Council approved an Urban Agriculture Strategy (UAS) in 2022. As a part of the UAS, there are actions related to community garden expansion and supporting local food access and growing. The City has also encouraged residents to increase the number of plant-based meals they eat each week (see, for example, this news release).

¹ United Nations, N.D. Food and Climate Change: Healthy Diets for a Healthier Planet, accessed on March 25, 2025, <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/food>.

Subsidize fruits, vegetables and legumes to make a plant-based diet more affordable and end food deserts	In partnership with Ecosource, the City operates an expanding community garden program. All food grown at the Iceland Teaching Garden is donated to local food banks.
Reforestation projects using native tree species to restore habitats	The Natural Heritage and Urban Forest Strategy guides the management of the natural heritage system and urban forest to ensure they are protected, enhanced, restored and expanded for future generations. The City's Invasive Species Management Plan also aims to protect biodiversity.

Conclusion

Of the Plant Based Treaty's proposals, there are many that are outside the City's jurisdiction or that are not applicable. However, several of the proposals that do apply are well aligned with existing City strategies, as noted above.



Megan Gereghty, Climate Change Specialist, Environment Section