



Policy Recommendations Document

Community-Informed Policy Recommendations for Saint Paul's Climate and Food Justice Strategy

Frogtown Farm | CNCA Climate Justice Grant | March 31, 2026

Introduction

This document presents community-informed policy recommendations developed through six weeks of structured climate justice education and the Frogtown Climate & Growers Mini Summit held March 7, 2026 at 825 Arts in Saint Paul.

These recommendations reflect the lived expertise of more than 25 community participants, primarily Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) urban farmers, herbalists, educators, and emerging growers engaged through Frogtown Farm's *Farm & Garden Planning for Climate Justice* program.

Through a combination of facilitated sessions, peer exchange, and Summit dialogue, participants identified key barriers, priorities, and solutions at the intersection of urban agriculture, climate resilience, and community health.

These recommendations are grounded in both lived experience and applied practice, representing community-led strategies for advancing equitable climate action in Saint Paul.

Policy Co-Creation Process

Community Planning Sessions (January 21 – February 25, 2026)

Six virtual sessions explicitly connected participants' growing experiences to local climate policy and systems.

Participants completed a structured Grower Worksheet identifying actions needed from the City, funders, and partner organizations to better support urban growers and community food systems.

Sessions included:

- Overview of the City of Saint Paul Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP)
- Discussion of the garden lease program and land access challenges
- Barriers to water access, including hydrant permitting
- Urban heat island data identifying Frogtown/Thomas-Dale as a high-risk neighborhood

This phase grounded policy development in lived experience, ensuring that recommendations were rooted in real conditions faced by growers.



Mini Summit Capstone (March 7, 2026)

The in-person Summit served as a capstone experience, bringing together growers, program participants, researchers, and City of Saint Paul climate staff.

Presentations provided technical and policy context across key areas:

- Urban farming, community health, and climate resilience
- Soil health, carbon sequestration, and regenerative practices
- Urban heat island impacts specific to Frogtown
- City climate policies and sustainability goals

Each presentation was followed by facilitated dialogue, allowing participants to reflect, ask questions, and connect technical knowledge to their own experiences.

Participants then completed structured policy worksheets and engaged in direct conversation with city partners, strengthening the connection between community knowledge and policy development.

Post-Program Survey

Thirteen participants submitted formal policy recommendations through the post-program survey as part of the program's exit assessment.

These responses reinforced and refined themes identified throughout the sessions and Summit, providing clear, participant-driven policy language and priorities.

Policy Recommendations

Category 1: Land Access and Tenure

Recommendation 1.1

The City shall create long-term land tenure and anti-displacement protections for BIPOC farmers and growers, because generational stability is necessary to build sustainable food systems and repair historic inequities.

Recommendation 1.2

The City shall allow and expand urban agriculture across all residential and commercial zoning districts to support local food systems, because it reduces emissions, increases food access, and strengthens community resilience.

Recommendation 1.3



The City shall expand and promote the garden lease program by offering lease terms of at least five years, enabling growers to make meaningful long-term investments in land, soil health, and production.

Category 2: Infrastructure, Water, and Equipment

Recommendation 2.1 (Most frequently cited — 8 of 13 survey respondents)

The City shall fund urban agriculture infrastructure, including water access systems, soil improvement, and protective fencing, to support community growers, expand local food production, and enhance climate resilience.

Recommendation 2.3

The City shall fund compost collection and distribution for community gardens and urban farms to improve soil health, reduce organic waste sent to landfills, and support regenerative growing practices.

Recommendation 2.4

The City shall expand access to tools and growing resources through grants and shared equipment programs, because reducing the cost of entry supports equitable food production and participation.

Category 3: Urban Agriculture Policy and Climate Strategy

Recommendation 3.1

The City shall invest in community-based food systems and climate-adaptive growing practices, prioritizing neighborhoods most impacted by food insecurity and urban heat, including Frogtown/Thomas-Dale, North End, and the Greater East Side.

Recommendation 3.2

The City shall allow and fund the cultivation of edible and medicinal plants in community spaces—including boulevards, park edges, and underutilized public land—because food sovereignty begins at the neighborhood scale.

Recommendation 3.3

The City shall support and expand shared incubation farming programs like Frogtown Farm's Grower Incubation Program, recognizing them as climate infrastructure that builds food security, green workforce capacity, and community resilience simultaneously.



Recommendation 3.4

The City shall include urban farmers and growers as active participants in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP), recognizing them as key stakeholders rather than solely recipients of outreach.

What Decision-Makers Should Understand

Across community planning sessions, the Mini Summit, and post-program survey responses, participants consistently emphasized that urban agriculture is not a fringe activity, it is a critical component of climate resilience, food access, and community well-being.

Participant reflections highlight several key insights for the City of Saint Paul:

- Urban agriculture provides multiple public benefits, including food access, climate mitigation, and neighborhood beautification:
“Urban agriculture should be a cornerstone of our communities. Since it provides not only food, but climate relief, that benefits us all.”
- Increasing green space through food production improves environmental health and community conditions:
“The more plants in the community, the better the community looks and the cleaner the air.”
- Long-term land access is essential for sustainability and investment in growing systems:
“We need continuity of land access to be able to invest and sustain our work over time.”
- There is strong community interest and readiness to participate in local food systems:
“Pretty much everybody would like to grow and eat their own food.”
- Current municipal approaches are not keeping pace with community-led climate solutions:
“Municipal government is way behind on implementing climate strategies as they relate to agriculture.”
- Frogtown Farm represents a significant and valued community asset with the potential for broader impact:
“As one of the largest urban farms in the country and one of the most diverse, we are lucky to have this amazing community asset.”

Distribution

This document is submitted to the Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance (CNCA) as part of required program deliverables and will be shared with the following City of Saint Paul entities:

- Mayor’s Office
- Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department
- Saint Paul Climate Justice Advisory Board



Findings and recommendations from this document will also inform Deliverables 4 and 5 of the CNCA Climate Justice program.